



## City Officials Explain Reversion, Urge County to Join Conversation

**Brandon Martin**  
*Staff writer*

The Martinsville City Council discussed the potential reversion of a city into a town at the Municipal Building on Nov. 19.

Under the new town reversion status, Martinsville would still maintain responsibility for urban services such as police, fire, water and sewer. The county, on the other hand, would take over services such as schools, social services, mental and health facilities, and the constitutional offices.

Reversion, a process the city has been considering since the 1980s, is being considered because the cost to

provide services for the citizens of Martinsville continues to increase, while revenue does not.

To balance the budget, the city expects to have to use the city's fund balance which will increase rates in fees or result in significant reduction of services to its citizens.

"The city council sets the policy for the city regarding the fund balance and cash reserves," explained City Manager Leon Towarnicki. "We do have a cash reserve for the utilities and a fund balance for the general fund and through that, it's \$13 million or \$14 million so the perception that the city is going broke is simply not the truth. The city has money and that

financial reserve is what keeps the city stable. You don't want to get into a situation where you start spending that reserve and you use that to balance the budget."

Reversion will allow for the possible consolidation with the county for services such as schools or constitutional functions.

Assistant City manager Eric Monday, who also is city attorney, listed the steady decline in population as having an adverse effect on schools.

"Over the last decade, the student population has declined by almost over 600 students," he said. "The loss of each student means a cor-

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PHOTO BY BRANDON MARTIN

**Eric Monday, Assistant City Manager and City Attorney, discussed various points of Martinsville potentially reverting from a city to a town during a meeting Tuesday in Martinsville.**

## Localities respond to concerns about potential firearms legislation

**Brandon Martin and Debbie Hall**  
*Staff writers*

Local authorities said they have responded to calls from many about changes that may be proposed to firearms legislation following the outcome of the November election.

Many of the proposals of most concern to residents were among a sweeping gun control package Gov. Ralph Northam introduced during a July 2019 special session of the General Assembly, Patrick County Sheriff Dan Smith said. Earlier this year, Gov. Ralph Northam (D) announced a list of gun-control policies to be voted on in a special session following the May 31 attack which led to the death of 12 people at the Vir-

ginia Beach Municipal Building.

"It's an emergency here in Virginia, and it's time to take action," Northam told the Associated Press at the time. "Every one of these pieces of legislation will save lives."

Less than two hours into the special session, Virginia lawmakers abruptly adjourned the meeting and postponed any movement on gun laws until after the November elections.

Following big wins for Democrats in that election where they took control of both chambers of the Virginia General Assembly, Northam looks to make strides on gun legislation again with this being the first time since 1993 that Democrats have had full control to enact their agenda.

"Dealing with the gun violence in Virginia will be a top priority of our administration," Northam said. "Now certainly with a Democratic Senate and House, I believe we can move forward with common sense gun legislation."

Among the policies that Northam hopes to get passed is legislation on universal background checks, closing a loophole allowing private citizens to sell guns without getting background checks. He also looks to place a ban on assault weapons, high-capacity ammunition magazines, silencers and devices that increase a gun's firing rate known as "bump stocks."

When asked if he would con-

See **Firearms Legislation**, page 4



Virgil "JR" Powell

## Powell Recognized for his Service

**Brandon Martin**  
*Staff writer*

Virgil "JR" Powell, director of the Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center, was presented the 2019 Governor's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Telecommunication at the 40th Annual Governor's EMS Awards ceremony in Norfolk.

The award recognizes outstanding EMS providers and organizations from across the Commonwealth for their demonstrated level of excellence and dedication to the EMS system.

Presented in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Office of Emergency Medical Services' Annual EMS Symposium, the awards ceremony caps off the week-long training event. The largest EMS training event in the Commonwealth and one of the largest in the nation, this year's symposium welcomed more than 1,700 participants. The symposium offers each participant the opportunity to earn up to 26 hours of continuing education credits for recertification as an EMS provider via more than 400 class sessions.

When asked about the award, Powell attributed his success at the Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center "first of all from the blessings of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Without him I am nothing. Hard work, dedication, reliability, and being ready to jump in where and when needed" also have helped propel him to excel. "This is a job of thinking on your toes where seconds can be the difference in life or death."

After graduating Martinsville High School in

1989, Powell joined the United States Marine Corps (USMC) for six years, serving in both Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Following his time in service, Powell found out that life can sometimes throw you a curveball.

"Following my six years serving in the USMC, I returned home to Martinsville along with my wife and our two children," he explained. "I was initially interested in law enforcement. While waiting to hear back from local law enforcement agencies, I learned of a position open as a 911 dispatcher in the local Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center. I applied and was interviewed by (then) 911 Director Henry Gilbert. I remember Mr. Gilbert calling me on the phone and said he had read a Letter of Recommendation that had been prepared by my USMC commanding officer. He stated 'I don't know who you are or anything about you but after reading this letter of recommendation, I've got to at least meet you.'"

After being hired in 1995 as a 911 dispatcher, he was promoted to Assistant Shift Supervisor in 1998, Operations Supervisor in 2000, and finally to his current position in 2012.

"When I started this career in 1995, it didn't take long for me to realize I really enjoyed being the calm voice on the phone and/or radio helping our citizens and responders in the field," he said.

See **Powell**, page 3

## First Horizon Acquires Local Branches Following BB&T, SunTrust Merger

**Brandon Martin**  
*Staff writer*

First Horizon National Corp. announced that it has entered into a deal with SunTrust Banks Inc. and BB&T Corp. to acquire 30 branches across North Carolina, Virginia and Georgia on Nov. 8.

At the onset of 2019, U.S. regional lender BB&T agreed to buy SunTrust banks for approximately \$28 billion in stock.

The two companies share the same region in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic with approximately 3,000 combined branches. Of those, about a quarter of them are within a couple of miles of each other, American Banker reported. Until recently, it was expected that some of the branches in Martinsville, Henry

County and Patrick County would be forced to close.

"First Horizon is excited to welcome new employees and customers to our family," Bryan Jordan, CEO and chairman of First Horizon, said in a release. "We are proud of the tradition of trust we have earned for more than 155 years and look forward to working with BB&T and SunTrust to design a seamless onboarding experience."

The SunTrust branches in Collinsville, Martinsville and Stuart are all slated to make the transition.

Due to the regulatory requirements involved in the SunTrust and BB&T merger, the branches are being divested. First Horizon will assume about \$2.4 billion in deposits and will purchase roughly \$410 million in loans. The deal is expected to

close in early 2020, and First Horizon anticipates it will retain the SunTrust employees. The branches will operate under the First Horizon brand.

First Horizon noted that the new branch acquisitions were unrelated to their own recent merger with Iberia-Bank.

The merger between SunTrust and BB&T is not expected to take effect until the final months of 2019 or possibly not until early 2020. In the meantime, both banks will continue operating separately.

"We expect the transaction to close ... in the fourth quarter of this year," says Brian Davis, director of corporate communications at BB&T. "Once that happens, we will continue to serve clients through the

See **Bank Merger**, page 3

## Christmas Magic Comes to Martinsville



**Brandon Martin**  
*Staff writer*

The 2019 Martinsville-Henry County Christmas Parade is set for Nov. 23, beginning at 5 p.m., in Uptown Martinsville, along Church, Main and Broad streets.

The theme for this year is "The Magic of Christmas." Warren "Sonny" Richardson was chosen as this year's grand marshal.

Richardson, a Henry County bus driver and the commander of American Legion Homer Dillard Post 78, attributed this distinction to his work with veterans.

As part of the American Legion, Richardson helps local veterans get assistance and responses from the Veteran's Administration.

"One word to help these vets get what they want is being patient," Richardson said. "Being denied a couple of times works on your patience. They're going to give it to you, but that's how it works."

Richardson helps obtain funds for veterans that need assistance with accessibility to bathrooms and he also instated the "Buddy Plan" that ensures that Legion chapter members keep regular contact with three veterans who have mobility limitations.

He also is involved with the community from flag presentations, to helping with oratorical presentations for some of the many students that he buses to school, and

See **Christmas Magic**, page 5

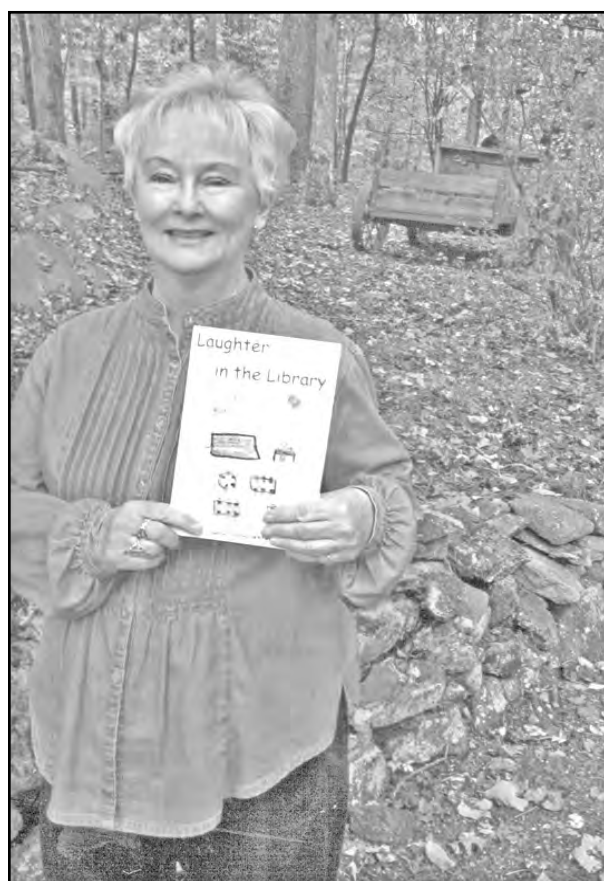








# Former Librarian Shares Memories in New Book



**Cory L. Higgs**  
*Contributing writer*

In her first book, Debbie Youngman shares a collection of stories and accounts from her career as a librarian in Virginia and North Carolina. The Bristol Tennessee native, who now lives in Henry County, spent a lifetime in the library.

Through that journey, Youngman said she interacted and met an array of unique children who created, as the book is titled, ‘Laughter in the Library.’

Even now, she laughs when recalling some of the comments from kids over the years.

Youngman said that her career in the library began in 1970, after she graduated from the University of Tennessee. Youngman was hired as an assistant librarian at Bluefield College in West Virginia.

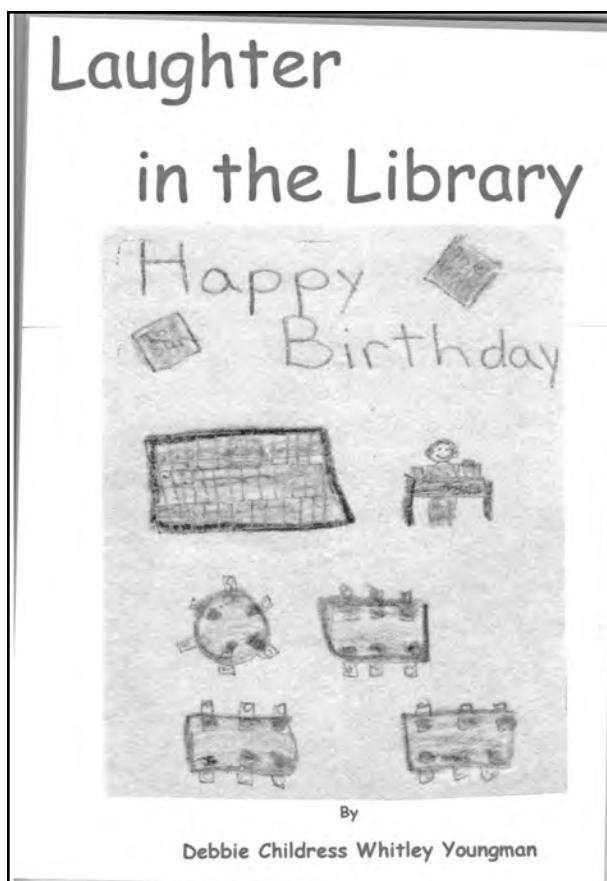
Youngman said she met her first husband while in that post, and then moved around Virginia, landing in several different jobs before ultimately landing a job at an elementary school in Ashland, Virginia. That was when she got the idea of journaling about her experiences. Youngman said she jotted down the humorous interactions of her daily

routine so that she wouldn’t forget the comments children made to her, often in passing. At the time, Youngman said she never thought of compiling those notes into a book.

Not all of the memories are as pleasant. Youngman recalled that she accepted a job at a library with more than 900 students, and described it as “a mess.” That position was a learning experience, she said, adding that it inspired her to attend graduate school the following year (1974) to attain her master’s degree in library sciences.

She moved her life back to Tennessee and stayed with her father until she completed her degree in 1975. She then found herself in a new job at Doswell Elementary School, a much smaller school that served an estimated 100 students. There, Youngman continued to build her journal, cataloging the precious moments the children shared with her.

After spending a year in that position, Youngman hit the road once again and moved to Henry County. She substituted for school librarians before accepting a full-time position in 1977 at Clearview Elementary School. She held that position for 29 years, until the school closed in 2006.



All totaled, Youngman said she spent 40 years as a librarian, including the 37 years she spent in elementary schools. She also served as a librarian for the First Presbyterian Church in Martinsville and joined the North Carolina Church and Synagogue Library Association, where she served as president for a few years.

Youngman said she was looking for paperwork in a drawer when she stumbled across the old journal she had maintained for so many years. After reading those old notes and laughing till her jaws hurt, Youngman said she decided to share the joys she encountered during her 40 years of service.

Even the artwork on the front of her books was drawn by a student in her library, Youngman said, adding it highlights just a small portion of the laughter that was in the library.

Youngman and her books will participate in the Basset High School Band’s Fall Craft Show, which will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Nov. 23 and 1 to 5 p.m. on Nov. 24. She said she hopes to see many friends – old and new – while there at the craft show. It will be held at Basset High School, 85 Riverside Drive, Basset.

# Powell

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Even though he has made it to the top, Powell knows that his accomplishments are part of a team effort.

“Our team here at Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center is 26 strong,” he said. “All of our team are Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs). We have all received training to provide lifesaving pre-arrival instructions over the 911 line until EMS help arrives on scene. We began EMD in 2012 and without any doubt, it has made the difference to many citizens calling with life threatening EMS emergencies.”

Powell said that his team is the driving force in the public safety process for the city and county. They process thousands of emergency calls each year, dispatching police, fire and EMS units. They also keep track of all emergencies and routine police work for Martinsville and for Henry County.

“They perform a job where they are seldom recognized or mentioned for what they do to help our citizens and the agencies we serve,” he said. “But that is part of the job. We don’t do it for fame or to be recognized. We do it because we love serving our citizens and helping people in their time of crisis.”

While Powell said he appreciated the award, he also noted that there is plenty about the job that makes it all worthwhile.

“There are several things I truly enjoy about being a part of our 911 team,” he said. “I truly enjoy serving beside all 26 of our team members, providing lifesaving services to our citizens and all the police, fire and EMS agencies we serve. My 25 years here at Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center have been rewarding in many ways and I am thankful for the opportunities I have been blessed with.”

# Bank Merger

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legacy BB&T and SunTrust brands for some time until the two companies’ systems are merged.”

Once the two are finally integrated under the new bank company called Truist, consumers can expect changes to their accounts, interest rates, credit cards, automatic bill pay and mobile apps.

The two banks have not made any final decisions on what other branches will be consolidating.

“We recognize that as we combine our two companies, we’ll need to consolidate some branches, and we’ll be thoughtful in our approach and seek to minimize disruptions to our clients,” said Hugh Suhr, a SunTrust spokes-

man. “We have not determined which branches will be affected.”

The merger, announced in February, will make Truist the sixth-largest bank by assets in the U.S.

The bank merger is pending many regulatory approvals, including from the Federal Reserve Bank, Department of Justice and Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

The combined bank is expected to spend an incremental \$100 million annual investment on technology, Suhr says.

“For now, it remains business as usual and nothing changes,” he says. “Towards the end of 2019, we will follow up with additional information.”

# Photography Show Winners Announced

Artists from Ridgeway and Basset were among the winners in the second annual Nancy Susan Reynolds Photography Show at the Reynolds Homestead.

Winners were announced in the following categories:

## Architecture

**1st Place** – Rick Craig, Stuart, “Nature Returns”

**2nd Place** – Dan Leeper, Ridgeway, “Transition to the Future”

**3rd Place** – Julie Walters Steele, Stuart, “Vertigo”

## People

**1st Place** – Tara Craig, Stuart, “Holding onto Moments”

**2nd Place** – Nick Spencer, Stuart, “Looking Back”

**3rd Place** – Ricky Dawson, Stuart, “Out at First”

## Nature

**1st Place** – Jeryl Stowe, Stuart, “Original Web Designer”

**2nd Place** – Jim Childs, Basset, “Spring to

## Summer”

**3rd Place** – Terri Gaudin Little, Basset, “Waiting on Lunch”

## General/Special

**1st Place** – Harper Steele, Stuart, “Rumble Ridge”

**2nd Place** – Barry Taylor, Stuart, “Paradise”

**3rd Place** – Joan Lawson, Stuart, “Ted”

**Best in Show** – Youth Kali Craig, Stuart, “Back to Dust”

**Best in Show** – Adult Rick Craig, Stuart, “Ocean’s Edge”

The theme for the 2020 show – “Home/Homecoming” – was announced at the Nov. 7 reception. It will celebrate the upcoming 50th anniversary of the dedication of the Reynolds Homestead. Photographers are encouraged to explore that theme in their photography over the next year to prepare for the fall show.



Kali Craig’s “Back to Dust” was selected as Best in Show Youth

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# OPINION

## In defense of the evil giant

Hello everyone. Hi. Could I have the speaking conch for a moment? Thank you so much.

Listen, I'm sorry to interrupt this village meeting, but I feel I need to speak up. I'm sure you all know me – my name is Algar, and I live on the outskirts of the Swamp of Despair. In spite of the name, it's actually pretty nice. I'm a mud farmer. Maybe you've seen my flyers around town – "Don't pick a dud, buy Algar's mud." If you're building a mud hut, it's, you know, really high quality mud.

Anyway, I've been hearing a lot of people tonight talking about how we need to kill the evil giant that lives on Terror Mountain. And while I respect your opinions, frankly, I couldn't disagree more.

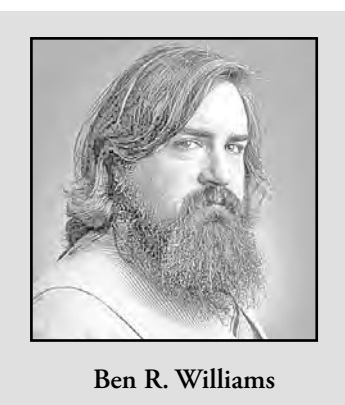
Now look, I'm not going to dispute the major points. Yes, the evil giant has an enormous hoard of gold, 10,000 times more gold

than everyone in this quaint village put together. Yes, the evil giant stomps down the mountainside once a month, usually crushing several of our homes. And yes, the evil giant routinely eats our livestock and frequently eats us as well. All of that is inarguable.

But let me ask you a question: Have you ever considered the benefits provided by the evil giant?

Please, stop throwing rotten turnips at me and listen for a moment.

First off, the evil giant is a self-made monster. I don't know where he got his gold horde from, but we have to assume he earned it through a combination of business acumen and being a giant. Do we really want to steal his hard-earned gold? Sure, having that gold would completely change our way of life and we would probably live to be older



Ben R. Williams

than 30. At the same time, if we kill the evil giant and take his gold, how will we incentivize our children to work hard and become evil, gold-hoarding giants themselves? It's a real moral hazard.

Furthermore, I'm sure you've all seen the evil giant sitting atop Terror Mountain and playing with his piles and piles of gold. I'm sure you've also noticed that

sometimes, because he has so much gold, a few pieces occasionally fall out of his hands and tumble down the mountain to where we can safely collect them. For generations, my family has relied on tumble-down economics to support our meager lifestyle. I'm not saying it's the best system in the world, but I have yet to see a better one.

And let us not forget that the evil giant is a job creator. I wouldn't sell nearly as much mud if the evil giant didn't routinely destroy so many of our mud homes. The bark gatherers wouldn't sell so much bark if the evil giant didn't eat so many of our pigs and cattle, thus forcing us to eat bark to survive. And of course, Moktar the Gravedigger wouldn't be able to support his family if the evil giant didn't kill so very, very many of us.

I know a lot of you support Sir Gallant the Giantslayer. You sup-

port his plan to kill the evil giant, take the evil giant's gold, and then put it in a trust that would be used to rebuild our village, educate our children, and purchase medical supplies, such as leeches and whiskey.

This, I feel, is the wrong approach. We must meet the evil giant in the middle. We need to select a delegate from the village, someone wise and respected, to climb Terror Mountain and meet the evil giant on his own terms. We need to ask the evil giant why he feels it necessary to eat us, crush our homes and devour our livestock. I'm sure that if we just talk things out with the evil giant instead of fleeing in terror from his ravenous jaws, we'll be able to find some middle ground. We might learn that the evil giant is not so different from us.

What's that? Oh, I couldn't possibly be the delegate. I'm, uh, too important.

## Firearms Legislation

from page 1

ginians that already possessed them, Northam responded by saying, "No ma'am, not at this stage. We're looking at banning the sales of assault weapons ... that would be what we would start with."

Additional legislation up for consideration is reinstating a law repealed in 2012 that limited handgun purchases to one per month and proposing a new law requiring anyone whose firearm is lost or stolen to report it to police within 24 hours. Northam also is proposing enacting a "red-flag law" where courts can seize guns from people that a judge deems a threat to themselves or others.

He has also stated that he would like to expand a law prohibiting anyone subject to a court's final protective order from possessing a gun as the current law only bans people subject to a protective order for family abuse. The final law he has proposed is one allowing cities and counties the ability to pass stricter gun laws than the state, such as banning firearms from public buildings or events.

"Some of the measures proposed put me at odds with my oath," Smith said. "Anyone who knows me knows my deep sup-

port and appreciation for our Constitution and its Bill of Rights. My oath of office requires me, and every deputy sheriff that I appoint, to swear to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia," Smith wrote in a social media post that detailed his concerns.

Smith noted that he also has "spoke to several sheriffs in the area, and like me, they've been getting many contacts from citizens worried about their gun rights and the impact of any new changes."

Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry said he encourages residents with concerns to "professionally voice their concerns" in calls to their respective state representatives.

"I firmly believe in the Second Amendment. I enjoy shooting sports, I own guns and I believe in the Second Amendment rights," Perry said. "Beyond that, I am waiting to see what bills" lawmakers may consider.

Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper said that he had several calls Monday from those voicing concerns about potential changes to firearms legislation.

"The majority of citizens are still opposed to changing" laws per-

taining to firearms, said Draper, who also is a board member of the Virginia Sheriff's Association. "There are parts of it I think won't be a problem, but other" parts may be, he said.

Concerns are so rampant that some localities also have adopted Second Amendment Sanctuary resolutions. Resolutions are carried up to the state legislature, imploring lawmakers not to back laws that county leaders say target law-abiding gun owners.

Measures like the resolutions are seen as a direct referendum to potential legislation being pushed by Democratic lawmakers in the Virginia General Assembly and the United States Congress.

Local governing boards in Carroll and Campbell counties were among the first, and on Monday, officials in Patrick and Appomattox counties followed suit. (See related story, Patrick County Now A Second Amendment Sanctuary)

Henry County Administrator Tim Hall said a resident is scheduled to address the Henry County Board of Supervisors at their Nov. 26 meeting, however, a proposed resolution is not yet on the agenda.

"That would be completely driven by the

board," Hall said of the county's consideration of a Second Amendment Sanctuary resolution.

When asked to respond if they would support a resolution, Joe Bryant, of the Collinsville District and Tommy Slaughter, of the Reed Creek District, said they would wait to comment until after the matter was discussed as a group.

Dr. J. David Martin, of the Iriswood District, said "I took an oath to uphold the Constitution." He declined additional comment.

Jim Adams, board chairman and of the Blackberry District; Debra Buchanan, vice chairman and of the Horsepasture District; and Ryan Zehr, of the Ridgeway District, could not be reached for a comment.

Before the vote in Patrick, Lock Boyce, of the Peters Creek District, said that while he agreed with "some of what the governor wants to do, some of the other things, like not allowing children under the age of 18 to possess, handle or have a firearm" prompted him to support the resolution. "A ten-round clip proposal is just not going to work in Patrick County, I don't think, and there were some other things that I didn't like,"

he said.

Smith said those issues and other also are among the concerns he has heard.

"Do you want to be told that you can't have a magazine for your hand gun that is capable of firing more than ten rounds of ammunition," Smith asked in a social media post. "Do you want to be automatically criminalized because you couldn't afford to pay \$35 for a background check if your father gives you a gun to protect yourself with from a violent, estranged husband. These are some of the proposals that have been introduced for passage."

Noting that "it is my responsibility to see that you are not subjected to unlawful and unreasonable searches of your home by my deputies," Smith added he also is responsible to ensure "that you are not treated inhumanely while you are in custody .... that your freedom or property is not taken from you without probable cause, as the fourth amendment demands. It is also my responsibility to protect your right to keep and bear arms."

Analysis of the two latest polls regarding the issue show a growing trend amongst Virginians to increase gun-control measures. Support for such measures was at 54 percent in a 2018 poll compared to only 41 percent opposing new laws. Similar numbers of 55 percent in support and 41 percent opposing were found in 2016.

When it comes to ending the requirement for a permit to carry a concealed firearm, 76 percent of voters opposed the idea in 2018 as well as 84 percent in 2016. More than six in 10 Virginians support a ban on assault weapons, 65 percent in 2018 and 62 percent in 2016.

General support or opposition for gun legislation is mostly divided by party lines. While Democrats may have made gains by carrying districts encompassing larger cities, if the resolutions in Patrick and Campbell counties are any indicator, the more rural communities see the latest election results as far from a mandate on gun control.

One thing is certain, Draper said, "It will be interesting to see how the General Assembly addresses some of the public's concerns during the upcoming session."

Martinsville Police Chief Eddie Cassidy said he has not had heard concerns about legislation that may be proposed.

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## STEP Presents Service Awards

Seven employees at STEP, Inc. were recognized recently for their years of service to the agency.

STEP (Solutions That Empower People) is a community action agency with services in Franklin and Patrick counties, and Bedford, Martinsville and Danville. Services include Early Head Start and Head Start; youth services (LIFES Academy and Project Discovery); senior services (Meals on Wheels, transportation); supportive services (re-entry, homelessness prevention); housing and weatherization; and financial services (tax preparation assistance, financial education, individual development accounts). STEP's mission is to empower people to overcome barriers to economic, educational and developmental success within the communities it serves.

STEP has offices in Rocky Mount, Martinsville, and Stuart.

Those receiving service awards (listed with their hometowns) are:

- Paul Doughton – 5 years- Ferrum- Housing Assistant/Custodian
- Christy Foley – 5 years- Stuart-

Head Start Teacher

- Debra Frye – 10 years- Ferrum- LIFES Academy Paraprofessional
- Cindy Hostutler – 20 years- Hardy- Head Start Health and Family Services Advocate
- Whitney Long – 5 years- Rocky Mount- Human Resources Specialist
- Elisabet Minter – 5 years- Bassett- EHS Family Educator
- Jacquelyn Thurston – 5 years- Rocky Mount- EHS Infant/Toddler Teacher

STEP employees recently received service awards. From left to right, they are: Jacquelyn Thurston, Whitney Long, Christy Foley, Elisabet Minter, Debra Frye, and Cindy Hostutler. Paul Doughton is not pictured.





From Left to right: Janie Brazier, Longwood's Director of Social Work at NCI; Christy Tilley, PHCC's Student Success Center Director; Pamela Randall, Longwood's Program Coordinator at NCI; Tiffani Underwood, the Executive Director of the PHCC Foundation.

## Longwood programs sponsor PHCC's student food pantry for the month of November

For the entire month of November, the Patriot Pantry – the student food pantry at Patrick Henry Community College [PHCC] – will be fully stocked thanks to the Longwood University's Education and Social Work programs. These two Longwood programs which are provided locally through the New College Institute [NCI] have sponsored the Patriot Pantry for the month of November – forming the Patriot-lancer partnership. The Follett Higher Education Group has also offered to match the Longwood programs' contributions as part of its Virginia Community College Schools Hunger Project.

In total, the Longwood programs' donation and the Follett match total \$1,000. These funds will go to purchase non-perishable food items as well as staples like shampoo and dish soap. The Pantry began in 2016. It serves more than 150 different students annually. To keep the pantry stocked, the college relies on donations

from the community and college personnel.

"We are very excited to be partnering with Longwood University at NCI to battle food insecurity on our campus. Next to transportation, hunger is one of our largest barriers to retention and completion," says Student Success Center Director and pantry manager, Christy Tilley. "This generous donation will be extremely beneficial to our students - especially during the holiday season when many of them meet this challenge."

According to data collected by Temple University and Wisconsin HOPE Lab, 42 percent of community college students in the US are food insecure. According to the data Tilley and her staff have collected, offering immediate assistance for hungry students does more than allay one day of hunger. Students are more likely to stay in school and complete a course of study when they receive services to meet their pressing needs.

"We know students have access

to financial aid which gets them to the school, but it doesn't cover basic necessities," says Pamela Randall, Longwood's Program Coordinator at NCI. "It's not enough just to go to school. No one can learn until their basic needs are met."

Randall explained that the idea to donate to PHCC Patriot Pantry was born out of thankfulness. "Our theme this month is 'being thankful.' Not only are we thankful for food, shelter, and education, we're thankful for PHCC. Longwood wouldn't have a presence in Martinsville without PHCC."

The partnership between PHCC and Longwood enables students to earn an associate degree at PHCC then finish their bachelor's degree through Longwood at NCI– all without leaving Martinsville. Randall pointed out that helping students be successful at PHCC by providing a donation to the food pantry could increase the likelihood that those students will one day start their bachelor's program at Longwood University.

## Special Session Concludes With Senators Vowing to Represent Va. Voters

**McKenzie Lambert**  
*Capital News Service*

Nineteen of the state's 140 General Assembly members were present Monday when the legislature reconvened at the state Capitol following the July 9 special session on gun violence that recessed in 90 minutes. Both the House of Delegates and the state Senate held meetings in their respective chambers. Both pro forma sessions -- sessions in which no business is conducted -- were adjourned in less than 10 minutes. The House started its meeting with a prayer and pledge of allegiance led by Majority Leader Del. Todd Gilbert, R-Shenandoah, who then called on outgoing House Speaker Kirk Cox, R-Colonial Heights, to recess the special session. The resolution outlining the session was offered July 9 following the Virginia Beach mass shooting in May, and originally intended to only introduce legislation related to gun violence, public safety, mental and behavioral health, and matters of the General Assembly. Fourteen delegates were in attendance, and the motion was approved. In the Senate chamber, five senators attended, including Sen. Adam Ebbin, D-Alexandria, who took the floor to speak. "On July 9, with parliamentary shenanigans, this session was gaveled shut before I even could speak," Ebbin said. "Ostensibly, we were there to give full and careful consideration to bills filed, or I should say they were referred to the Crime Commission for ostensibly extensive and careful consideration as though we didn't know already that keeping guns out of the wrong hands could save lives." Ebbin then referenced the recent three-page Crime Commission report: "The

absence of recommendations should not be interpreted as meaning that no changes to Virginia's laws are necessary, but rather that any changes are policy decisions, which can only be made by the General Assembly." "I'm only here today to promise that come January the people of this commonwealth will see action," he concluded. Sen. Amanda Chase, R-Chesterfield, expressed a different viewpoint, saying that her district, along with others around the state, spoke loud and clear. "The laws and the restrictions that the other side of the aisle want to put forth are going to do nothing more than hurt law-abiding citizens," Chase said. "And for that, we will continue to vocally express our grave concerns that those will be pushed forward and we will do everything in our ability to challenge those thoughts and ideas." On Nov. 9, Gilbert tweeted that the special session would proceed as pro forma, and that "going forward with a session that has no chance of producing legislation that will become law would be a waste of taxpayer resources." "The incoming majority will have the opportunity to propose and make their case in January for policies that reduce gun violence while hopefully protecting the rights of law-abiding gun owners. Republicans stand ready to propose our own ideas for reducing gun violence just as we have done this special session," Gilbert stated in the tweet. Several bills were filed Monday including HB2, introduced by Del. Ken Plum, D-Reston, which calls for universal background checks when purchasing firearms. The General Assembly will reconvene on Jan. 8.

*-Imani Thaniel contributed to this report*

## Christmas Magic

from page 1

helps with raising funds to the Ronald McDonald House.

"It's the happiest event of the year and I wanted the happiest person I could find to be the grand marshal," said Charles Roark, coordinator for the parade. "When I went all around town, everyone kept telling me Sonny, so that's how I knew. The biggest part about finding a grand marshal is finding someone that wants to do it. Luckily, Sonny wanted to do it, so it was kind of like the perfect match."

This year's parade will

consist of over 100 units to include: Harley Davidson motorcycles, marching bands, dancers, floats, civic organizations, horses and more.

Spectators are encouraged to arrive early to shop, grab dinner and pick out the perfect spot to watch the parade.

Prizes include cash, free dinner and services from various local businesses. The amount of prizes given out will be determined by the amount of entrants.

The entry fee for float applicants is free for educational entries, \$25 for

religious, non-profit, civic and vendor entries. Car Club Entries pay \$25 per vehicle. The price is \$50 for commercial and business entries; the fee for professional float entries is \$550.

Educational entries are for schools K-12 and colleges only. Participants will include the school Homecoming Court and Junior Miss or Miss Martinsville-Henry County. All professional floats must adhere to the Star News Parade rules and regulations and all vendors must complete the 2019 Vendor applica-

tion.

All decorations must be made of non-flammable material.

Applications were due by Nov. 9 but interested parties can still apply with a late fee of \$25 and will be added after the last placed entry. Applications will not be accepted once the line-up is finalized for media and parade officials.

All checks should be made payable to Star Parades.

The parade is sponsored by the Martinsville-Henry County Christmas Parade Association and Star News.

## CLUB NEWS

The Colonel George Waller Chapter - SAR Awards Its Good Citizenship of the Year Medal & Certificate

Recently, the Colonel George Waller Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution awarded its 2019 Bronze Good Citizenship Medal & Certificate to Fran Snead, who is the director of the Bassett Historical Center.

Snead earned a bachelor's and master's degree from Radford University and taught school in Henry County for 21

years before being employed at the BHC five years ago. She became director on January 1, 2019.

In addition to her director duties, she has written a number of feature articles for area newspapers on the history of Martinsville & Henry County.

She is a member of the Pocahontas Baptist Church in Henry County and she is a member of the General Joseph Martin Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.



Fran Snead with Bob Vogler (president of the CGW Chapter).

# Save the date

October 10, 2019 5:30 pm

## Empty Place at the Table

### Fundraising Gala and Silent Auction

Join us as we honor those who have lost their lives due to domestic violence and left an "empty place at the table."

For more information, please contact Warren Rodgers at (276) 403-4084 or [director@ssrcenter.org](mailto:director@ssrcenter.org)

 SSRCenter.org

## Southside Survivor Response Center, Inc.



# STEP Into Christmas Adds Festival of Trees

A new attraction has been added to the STEP Into Christmas Home Tour offered by Solutions That Empower People (STEP), Inc. this year.

A Festival of Trees, featuring 10 Christmas trees decorated by local nonprofit agencies, will be held in conjunction with the popular holiday home tour, set for Saturday, Dec. 7. The Festival of Trees is housed at the Franklin Center on Claiborne Avenue in Rocky Mount through December 12. The trees, provided by STEP, are decorated in a fashion that demonstrates the services offered by the nonprofit decorating it. Visitors are encouraged to vote for their favorite tree by placing a new, unwrapped toy under it. The tree with the most toys, “wins.” Following the event, the toys will be distributed to area children by We Care, Franklin County, and the trees will be given to families in the nonprofit’s clientele. “It’s a real feel-good holiday event, epitomizing the giving spirit of the season and encouraging people to look beyond the commercialism of this time of year,” said STEP Marketing and Communications Director Kris Landrum. “We hope to build community by encouraging our nonprofits to work together to create a stronger safety net for those in need. Participat-

ing agencies have an opportunity to grow awareness of their services and to support each other in the work that they do.” Nonprofits participating include the Bernard Health Care Center (better known as the Free Clinic), Blue Ridge Association for Sickle Cell Anemia, Disability Rights and Resource Center, Helping Hands of Franklin County, Henry Fork Service Center, Faith Network, Franklin County Family Resource Center, Franklin County Historical Society, Southern Virginia Child Advocacy Center, and Tri-Area Community Health. Signs designating which nonprofit decorated each tree will be situated nearby. The winning tree with the most toys will be announced December 10 and a ribbon will be placed on the tree’s sign. The trees will remain on display for two more days. The reception for the STEP Into Christmas Home Tour will also be held in the Franklin Center and is open to ticket holders. The prop-

erties included in this year’s tour are owned by David and Kimberly Lang (220 Claiborne Ave.); Jim and Diane Lovell (Earth Environmental at 235 Claiborne Ave.); Amy and Matthew Vann (The Claiborne House at 185 Claiborne Ave.); Glenna and Larry Moore (The Angle Guest House at 215 Claiborne Ave.); Richard and Teresa Harrell (an all-metal “Lustron” home at 170 High St.); and Aaron and Sarah Stubbs (145 Claiborne Ave.).

The event will also feature strolling Christmas carolers and a stop at the historic High Street Cemetery.

Tickets to the home tour are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the gate. Advance tickets are available in Rocky Mount at Carter’s Fine Jewelers, Haywood’s Jewelers, and the STEP office. In Moneta they may be purchased at PAC Interiors and Haywood’s Jewelers. For the latest information, visit STEP’s website at [www.stepincva.com](http://www.stepincva.com) or the STEP Into Christmas Facebook page.



“Resilience” is one of 10 trees decorated by nonprofits in the Festival of Trees organized by STEP at the Franklin Center in Rocky Mount.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS												
ASP	OPS	ABN										
SAY	SEP	PUG										
MOSUL	SAE	PRAWN										
AWESOME	COLUMBO											
ONTARIO	TWINING											
	GURU	REED										
PARSES	ASSI	STS										
OCA		ISH										
BEDSIDE	SPLASHY											
	PLOP	TIED										
BACILLI	OCARINA											
AGONIES	REVELER											
HEMIO	OLA	ENATE										
MEI	DAG	NAM										
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### Martinsville – Henry County Chamber of Commerce

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Martinsville,

1118 Memorial Blvd.,  
Martinsville,

1105 Brookedale St.,  
Martinsville

5972 AL Philpott Hwy

## Reversion

from page 1



Martinsville’s Vice Mayor Chad Martin (left) and Mayor Kathy Lawson, (center) listen intently to a Tuesday presentation about reversion.

responding loss in the amount of money that they get from the state in return. Declining population is a very serious thing from the standpoint of school funding and I’m sure as the council is aware of from the last budget cycles, the schools look to the cities, when they get a smaller check from Richmond, for you to make up the difference.”

In addition to schools being a major challenge for the city, overcrowding in jails and funding of the Smith River interceptor were also listed as being problematic.

Monday said that city revenues are largely consumed by schools and public safety, with little discretionary funding left available for items such as economic development, social improvement programs and property maintenance.

He reiterated throughout the presentation that the city is financially stable with a General Fund of about 3.1 million and a Utility Fund of about 11 million, but he also stressed that budget management allows the savings to support the new budget year.

In recent years, taxes and fees have increased. The city increased the meal tax rate in fiscal year (FY) 2014, from six percent to 6.5 percent, and then again in FY18, from 6.5 percent to seven percent. Water, sewer, electrical and cigarette taxes also were increased. This along with employee reduction, school population decreases and stagnant revenues have led to the city considering reversion.

“I think our citizens frequently tell our elected officials to run the government like a business,” Monday expressed. “Well as a matter of fact, we kind of do. It has different terminology and the numbers are a lot bigger, but the same common sense that’s applied to personal finances also works for local and state finances. The federal government is a bit different. We do not have the luxury of printing new money from a copying machine or borrowing it from the Chinese. Local and state governments have to balance their budgets, so we find our problems a lot more like normal people.”

Some citizens voiced concerns about the tax implications of a town reversion.

“The issue of taxes needs to be discussed because everybody that I’ve talked to about reversion in Martinsville, nobody has an idea that they will have to pay two taxes,” Warren Mitchell, a city resident said regarding the implementation of both a town and county tax.

Monday stressed that two tax bills did not mean that taxes would double for town residents.

“The reason that Martinsville is considering this is that either you can revert and wind up with two tax bills but a pretty stable tax burden, or we can continue doing what we are

doing and that’s going to result in a significant tax increase somewhere down the road if we want to continue to remain an independent city,” he explained.

Unlike a full consolidation, county approval of the reversion is not required and neither is voter approval. Some residents took issue with the latter.

“This item needs to be voted on by everybody in Henry County and everybody in the City of Martinsville,” said Mary Martin, a Henry County resident. “No six people sitting on a board in Henry County or five people sitting on a board in the city should have the power to make a decision that impacts every resident regardless of age, income, whatever for the city and the county.”

The meeting wrapped up with most citizens and the city council itself urging county officials to come to the negotiating table.

“There are five people sitting here who really want to talk, but it does take two sides to have a conversation,” said Monday. “Coming and telling this council that we ought to be talking, you are preaching to the choir. If you want that conversation to occur, please call your elected representative in the county and make that suggestion to them.”

One person in the crowd took the opportunity to do just that at the meeting.

“I just wanted to make a statement that I was hoping to see somebody from the Henry County Board of Supervisors here tonight, and I’d like to call on the Henry County Board of Supervisors to sit down with City Council and discuss this matter,” said Andrew Palmer, a county resident.

“We would love to sit down with the county,” Vice Mayor Chad Martin said. “We’ve already actually worked out who would go and actually talk. The problem is that they won’t sit down with us unless we vote to revert.”

If the two sides come to an agreement to revert, then the process will be broken down into four steps: Commission of local government review, court deliberation, court ruling plus setting terms and conditions, and finally the city can determine to move forward.

If the city continues moving forward then the City Council will revert to a Town Council. The election cycle will remain the same, the county will control redistricting for Board of Supervisor districts and the town will gain the ability to annex land after two years.

Studies on the implications of reversion will be available in early December for the council to review. A public hearing on the matter is slated for Dec. 10. After that, the studies will be available for public review, before an eventual vote on the issue. Questions or comments on the reversion may be emailed to [town@ci.martinsville.va.us](mailto:town@ci.martinsville.va.us).



PHOTOS BY BRANDON MARTIN

Residents of Martinsville and Henry County packed the City Council Chambers Tuesday to hear a presentation about Martinsville potentially reverting from a city to a town.

## Security Standards Approved for 2020 Election

The Virginia State Board of Elections (SBE) unanimously passed minimum security standards for all Virginia elections administrators to follow beginning next year.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed HB 2178; this legislation called for new, modern cyber security standards that must be met throughout the Commonwealth before systems are allowed to access Virginia’s election database. Since July, the Department of Elections along with a workgroup comprised of local government IT professionals and general registrars have met to compose a list of standards that will help to ensure the integrity of Virginia’s voter registration system.

These new minimum security require-

ments for election administrators include, but are not limited to: setting new standards for creating secure passwords, requiring an increased emphasis on utilizing anti-virus protection on their election systems, and developing and training on incident response plans.

“Virginia is already recognized as a national leader for our focus and prioritization of initiatives designed to maintain the integrity of our elections,” said Department of Elections Commissioner Christopher Piper. “These new security standards will only bring even more support to our current efforts.”

These standards will be updated on an annual basis to keep up with changing technology and emerging cyber security threats.





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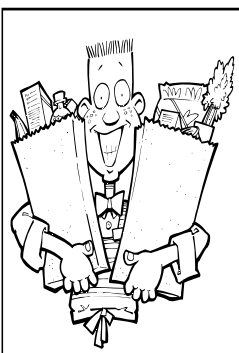
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## Estate Sale

December 13 & 14 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
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# BAG

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# DRBA Sets First Saturday Hike



**The Dan River Basin Association's Dec. 7 hike at Iron Ore Belt Access of Haw River State Park, Greensboro, N.C. is free and open to the public.**

**T. Butler**  
*Contributing writer*

The Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) will hold its First Saturday Outing on Dec. 7: a 3.2-mile hike on the Great Blue Heron Loop Trail in Iron Ore Belt Access of Haw River State Park, 6068 North Church Street, Greensboro N.C.

Participants will meet at 10 a.m. at the public parking lot at the end of the North Church Street entrance road. Coordinator for the outing is Dr. Will Truslow, an avid hiker and DRBA board member. The easy to moderate hike passes through a variety of ecosystems. Its southern path includes meadows and upland mature Piedmont forests of pine and hardwoods. The northern portion of the trail drops down and overlooks extensive wetlands that border the Haw River.

Opened to the public in 2016, Iron Ore Belt Access is located near the northern end of the North Carolina Pied-

mont's iron ore deposits. From the 1770s to 1798, ore from the area's mines was taken to Troublesome Creek Ironworks in Rockingham County for processing. During a second period of activity in the 1870s and 1880s the ore was shipped to a foundry on the western side of Greensboro. Some mining pits have been located on or near the park property, and veins of iron are found along ridge lines, which yield pebble- to boulder-sized rocks with deep red lines running through them.

Participants in the outing are asked to bring lunch, water, and hiking poles and wear hiking boots or walking shoes. Dress in layers of synthetic fabric or wool, and be prepared for wind or rain. All participants will be asked to sign a waiver.

Outings and meetings of the Dan River Basin Association are free and open to the public.

For more information, visit [www.danriver.org](http://www.danriver.org).

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# SPORTS

## Warriors Roll Into Second Round

**Harrison Hamlet**  
*Staff Writer*

(RIDGEWAY, Va.) – Revenge wasn’t on the mind of Magna Vista’s football team one week after a regular season finale loss to Bassett. Instead, the focus was on taking the first step towards the season-long goal of a Virginia High School League (VHSL) Group 3 state championship. The Warriors managed both on Friday night in Ridgeway, beating cross-county rival Bassett 36-7 to advance to the Group 3, Region D semi-finals.

“I thought our coaches did a great job preparing the kids. I thought we made some good adjustments and the kids went out and executed,” Magna Vista head coach Joe Favero said. “In the regular season, we just try to go out and get better and better. In playoff football, you have to put a lot into your game-plan and create matchups. I thought our guys did a great job preparing and executing, as well.”

Dryus Hairston, Freddie Roberts and Ty Grant led the charge for Magna Vista and set the tone early. The Warriors scored three first-half touchdowns and tacked on a field goal while holding the Bengals to just one first down in the opening 24 minutes.

The dominant opening half left the Bengals reeling at the break, and although Bassett played better in the second half, the story of the game was told in the opening two quarters.

“It’s about surviving and advancing, but I feel great about the way we played,” Favero said. “I thought they were a good team, but we played and executed the way we needed to in order to win games.”

Hairston took on more of a dual-threat role than he has through the regular season, as star running back Louis Taylor was dealing with a minor ankle injury suffered just 24 hours before the contest. Hairston ran for 33 yards and a touchdown and threw for 151 yards and a touchdown while limiting his turnovers to just one interception a week after struggling with ball security against Bassett’s defense.

“Last week, we had two touchdowns in the second half and turned the ball over three times. We didn’t punt,” Favero said. “So, we felt like we could move the football, we just had to clean things up and not turn it over. That’s what we did here tonight.”

Roberts, meanwhile, was

a jack-of-all-trades for the Warriors. The senior snagged a pair of first-down catches, then closed out the game at quarterback with a 26-yard completion to Grant and a rushing touchdown. Roberts also tallied several tackles, including a message-sending, third-down tackle for loss on the Bengals’ opening drive.

Roberts, Logan George, Dekavis Preston and Taylor limited Bassett’s ability to extend plays into the secondary while the Warriors’ defensive line was dominant at the line of scrimmage. Bassett managed only 53 yards before sacks are considered. If sacks are added to the statistics, the Bengals had a net loss of yardage on the night.

George tallied a defensive touchdown on a fumble recovery in the endzone in the third quarter that essentially put the game away.

“When you get the chance to get on the ball or make a big play, the kid has to step up and make it. That’s what you expect with a senior-laden team,” Favero said. “I thought we were really physical at the point of attack. The runs that were going for two, three, four yards last week were no gain or negative this week. That was just a matter of being physical, better pad level, and the defensive staff doing a good job and getting players in the right spot.”

“We played great as a team. We need to continue getting better. We had a great week of practice and need to keep doing that if we want to win four more weeks,” Preston said. “It’s always good momentum when you win, but especially with a showing like this. We just keep getting better and better.”

Magna Vista (8-3) moves on to the VHSL Group 3, Region D semi-finals where they will face Northside (8-3) in Roanoke at 7 p.m. on Friday night. Bassett (6-5) is eliminated from the playoffs. Lord Botetourt (11-0) and Hidden Valley (7-4) will play in the other Region D semi-final on Friday night.

If Magna Vista wants to claim their third state championship under Favero, they will need four more wins on the trot. Favero, though, is taking it one step at a time.

“You have to take these games one at a time. We go to Northside and we’ve had some good games with them in the past,” Favero said on Friday. “I haven’t seen them on film yet, but I’m sure they’re a well-coached, very athletic team and we’re going to have to go up there and play well.”

### Magna Vista High School 36, Bassett High School 7

BHS – 0 0 0 7 – 7

MVHS – 14 9 7 6 – 36

**SCORING SUMMARY**  
**FIRST QUARTER**  
3:25 – MVHS – Dryus Hairston 1 rush (Cory Osborne PAT good)  
1:26 – MVHS – Louis Taylor 6 rush (Cory Osborne PAT good)  
**SECOND QUARTER**  
3:41 – MVHS – Cory Osborne 30 field goal  
0:56 – MVHS – Ty Grant 35 pass from Dryus Hairston (PAT blocked)  
**THIRD QUARTER**  
6:58 – MVHS – Logan George fumble recovery in endzone (Cory Osborne PAT good)  
**FOURTH QUARTER**  
9:23 – BHS – Keshawn Valentine 14 pass from Jaricous Hairston(Freddi Lopez PAT good)  
5:10 – MVHS – Freddie Roberts 7 rush (PAT fail)  
**INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS**  
**BASSETT HIGH SCHOOL**  
**RUSHING**  
Kevon Smith 10 for 20;

Simeon Walker-Muse 5 for 0; Jaricous Hairston 4 for -2, fumble; Ty Cline 1 for -4. Total: 20 for 14.  
**PASSING**  
Jaricous Hairston 6-18 for 39, TD, INT.  
**RECEIVING**  
Demetrius Gill 2 for 17; Keshawn Valentine 3 for 13; Ty Cline 1 for 9.  
**MAGNA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL**  
**RUSHING**  
Dryus Hairston 8 for 33, TD; Freddie Roberts 5 for 28, TD; Louis Taylor, 9 for 17, TD; Isaiah Neal 3 for 12; Tyler Johnson 3 for 11; Drew Santoemma 1 for 9; Kylan Brown 5 for 8. Total: 34 for 118, 3TD.  
**PASSING**  
Dryus Hairston 9-20 for 151, TD, INT; Freddie Roberts 1-1 for 26.  
**RECEIVING**  
Ty Grant 4 for 92, TD; Tyler Johnson 4 for 65; Freddie Roberts 2 for 20.



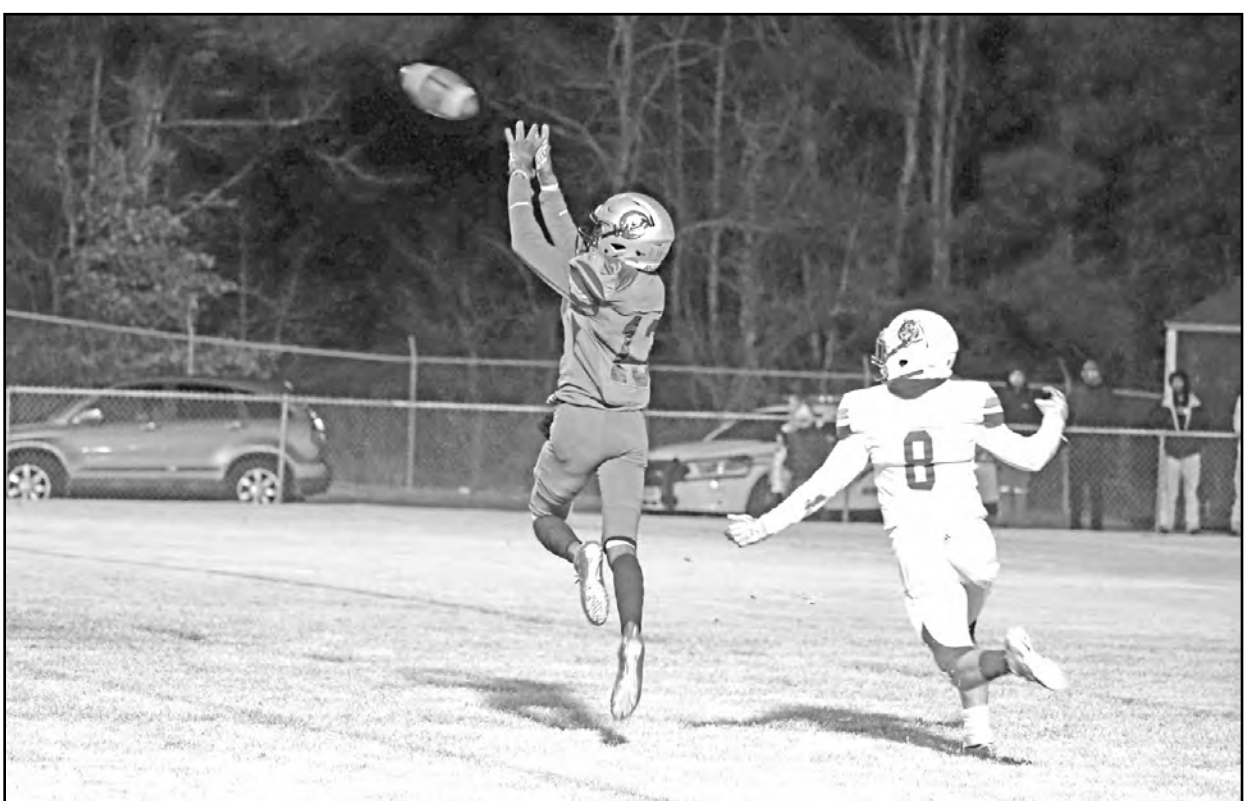
Magna Vista’s Logan George (8) celebrates his fumble recovery for a touchdown during Friday’s 36-7 win over Bassett in the VHSL Group 3 Region D playoffs.



Magna Vista’s Freddie Roberts (right) makes a catch for a first down during Friday’s 36-7 win over Bassett in the VHSL Group 3 Region D playoffs.



Magna Vista’s Dryus Hairston (2, center) runs for a first down during Friday’s 36-7 win over Bassett in the VHSL Group 3 Region D playoffs.



Magna Vista’s Ty Grant (13) goes up for a catch during Friday’s 36-7 win over Bassett in the VHSL Group 3 Region D playoffs.

PHOTO BY HARRISON HAMLET



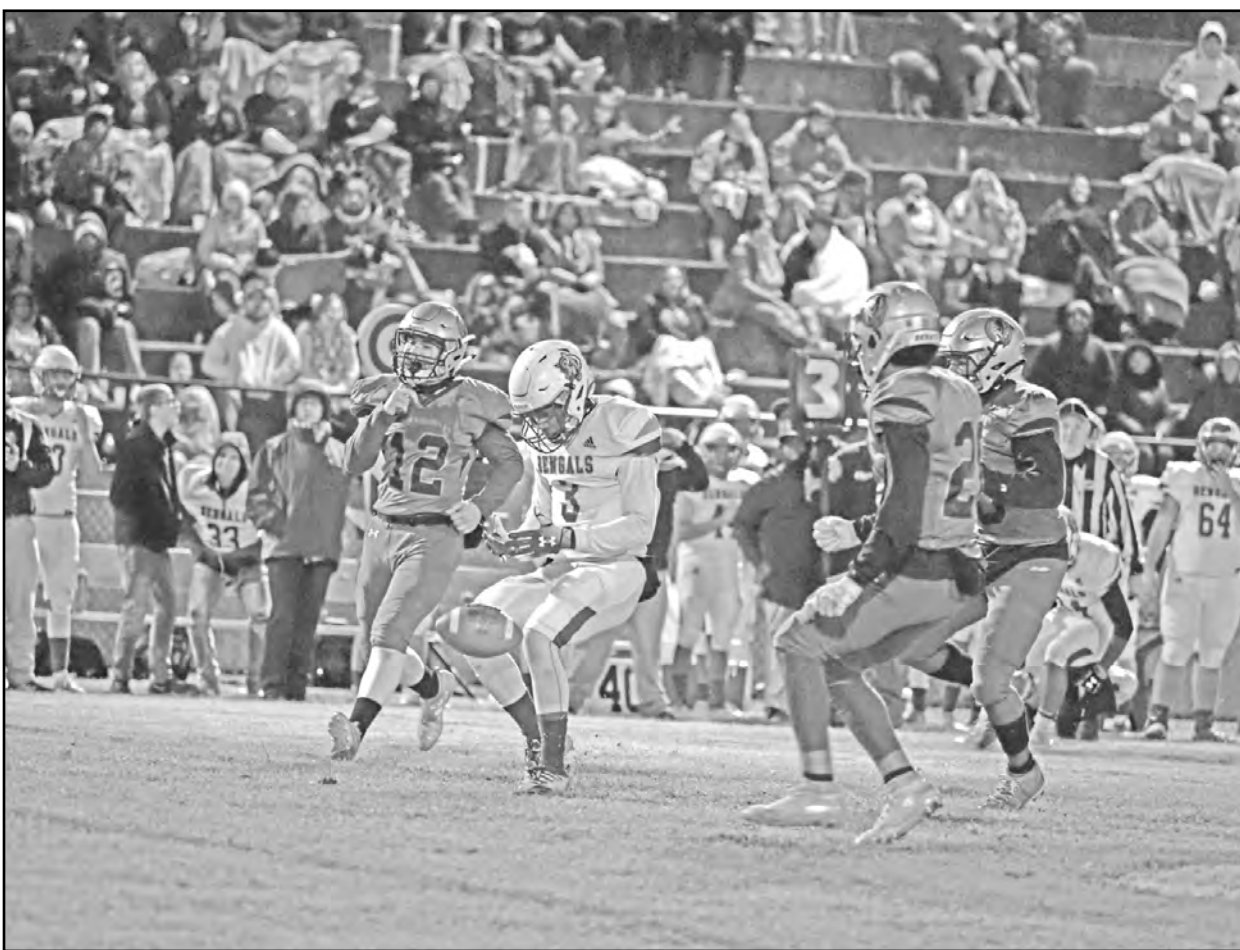
# Bengals' Season Comes to Close in Playoffs



Bassett running back Kevon Smith (9) runs for the Bengals' only first down in the first half of Friday's 36-7 loss to Magna Vista in the VHSL Group 3 Region D playoffs.



Bassett quarterback Jaricous Hairston (6) looks for the edge during Friday's 36-7 loss to Magna Vista in the VHSL Group 3 Region D playoffs.



PHOTOS BY HARRISON HAMLET

Bassett wide receiver Keshawn Valentine (3) stares at his hands after a drop during Friday's 36-7 loss to Magna Vista in the VHSL Group 3 Region D playoffs. Valentine made up for the error, scoring Bassett's only touchdown on the night.

## Harrison Hamlet Staff Writer

(RIDGEWAY, Va.) — Bassett's football team spent 12 weeks ignoring the doubters, turning their focus inward as they entered head coach Brandon Johnson's third season.

The Bengals were rewarded with a 6-4 record in the regular season, including a second-straight victory in the Smith River Classic over rival Magna Vista.

Their second contest against Magna Vista, however, did not have the same outcome. Bassett fell 36-7 in Ridgeway on Friday night in the opening round of the Virginia High School League (VHSL) Group 3, Region D playoffs, ending the Bengals' season.

"I'm proud of these guys," an emotional Johnson said after the game. "These tears aren't because we lost. It's because I don't get to coach a great group (of seniors) anymore... These guys have set the stage moving forward and I think eyes have been opened. Nobody expected us to be here and I am just proud of these seniors."

Bassett was unable to get much offense going throughout the game on Friday, earning just one first-half first down against a staunch Warriors defense.

Part of the issue for the Bengals was injuries along the offensive line, particularly at center. Bassett's starting center was injured in practice and their backup suffered a leg injury during the game, leaving the middle of the line vulnerable to an experienced Magna Vista front-seven.

"It is one of those things," Johnson said of the injuries at such a crucial position. "They put pressure on that and they knew the weakness. The

centers that came in, neither had ever played that position in their lives and they did an excellent job."

Down 30-0 in the third quarter, the Bengals were able to recover a fumbled snap on a Magna Vista punt and take advantage of the first-and-goal situation for their only score of the night, a 14-yard pass from Jaricous Hairston to Keshawn Valentine.

Johnson did not rue missed opportunities, but instead focused on the positives of the season.

"They have great program, we're striving to be like Magna Vista has been in this area. I think we took a huge step into that this year," Johnson said of the Warriors. "We'll take a little time off and reflect on this season and hit the weight room. Whether we win or lose, this is about life and how you react to adversity. Adversity struck tonight, but I thought we kept fighting... Nothing but respect and I'm just proud we had a chance to come out here and play them in the first round of the playoffs."

Bassett finishes the season at 6-5 overall and will graduate 15 seniors, including a dozen who have been with Johnson since his first day on the job.

"My last two senior classes have been good, but I didn't have enough time with them. These guys have been with me since day one... They bought in. It's been a good ride with them," Johnson said. "We're returning 9 starters on offense, nine hard-nosed guys... I'm excited about the future. That's one of those things you hate to think about now because of course we wanted to come out here and perform a little better, but our future is bright. We have a lot of kids that battle and I'm excited about the future and where we're going to go."

## Magna Vista High School 36, Bassett High School 7

BHS — 0 0 0 7 — 7

MVHS — 14 9 7 6 — 36

### SCORING SUMMARY FIRST QUARTER

3:25 — MVHS — Dryus Hairston 1 rush (Cory Osborne PAT good)

1:26 — MVHS — Louis Taylor 6 rush (Cory Osborne PAT good)

### SECOND QUARTER

3:41 — MVHS — Cory Osborne 30 field goal

0:56 — MVHS — Ty Grant 35 pass from Dryus Hairston (PAT blocked)

### THIRD QUARTER

6:58 — MVHS — Logan George fumble recovery in endzone (Cory Osborne PAT good)

### FOURTH QUARTER

9:23 — BHS — Keshawn Valentine 14 pass from Jaricous Hairston (Freddie Lopez PAT good)

5:10 — MVHS — Freddie Roberts 7 rush (PAT fail)

### INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS BASSETT HIGH SCHOOL RUSHING

Kevon Smith 10 for 20;

### SCORING SUMMARY

Simeon Walker-Muse 5 for 0; Jaricous Hairston 4 for -2, fumble; Ty Cline 1 for -4. Total: 20 for 14.

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### PASSING

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### RECEIVING

Ty Grant 4 for 92, TD; Tyler Johnson 4 for 65; Freddie Roberts 2 for 20.

## NASCAR and Rev Racing Announce 2020 Drive for Diversity Driver Development Team

Following a national search for top diverse driver talent, NASCAR and Rev Racing today announced the six ethnically diverse and female drivers selected to the 2020 NASCAR Drive for Diversity Driver Development Program.

The program's newest class features five drivers who will make their return to Rev Racing next season including Chase Cabre, Nicholas Sanchez, Gracie Trotter, Rajah Caruth and Isabella Robusto. Late model driver Perry Patino will make his debut with NASCAR Drive for Diversity in 2020.

Caruth and Robusto competed in the 2019 NASCAR Drive for Diversity Youth Driver De-

velopment Program and raced Legends cars for Rev Racing at this year's Bojangles' Summer Shootout in Charlotte, N.C. They also ran five other races with Rev Racing as part of the youth program.

"We are very enthusiastic about the progress we continue to make with the NASCAR Drive for Diversity Driver Development Program, and the 2020 class exemplifies the evolution of the program," said Jusan Hamilton, Director, Racing Operations and Event Management at NASCAR. "We were extremely impressed with the confidence, competitive drive and raw talent of the drivers that competed at this year's combine, which made

the selection process challenging for us. Our partners at Rev Racing work hard every year to develop the best diverse drivers around the world. To see familiar faces in this class that have grown and advanced through the youth ranks of the program bolsters our belief that we will see some of these same drivers at the top levels of NASCAR in the future."

The six drivers were selected from a group of invitees that competed in the two-day NASCAR Drive for Diversity Driver Development Combine in October at Daytona International Speedway and New Smyrna Speedway.

The combine included fit-

ness assessments and evaluations of each driver's marketing and media skills. The on-track portion tested the drivers' abilities behind the wheel and proficiencies in late model stock cars. Representatives from NASCAR and Rev Racing were on-hand to evaluate the talent and determine the 2020 team.

"We have seen great success this past year with our drivers having multiple wins in every series we participated in this season," said Max Siegel, Owner of Rev Racing. "Our returning drivers have certainly set the bar high. We are all excited to welcome the new members of this year's class to the Rev Racing family and continue the mo-

mentum moving into the 2020 season."

Caruth, Patino, Robusto and Trotter will compete in a NASCAR Late Model, while Cabre and Sanchez will compete in the ARCA Menards Series East and ARCA Menards Showdown Series in 2020.

Competing in a late model stock car will be a first for drivers like Caruth, whose background is in iRacing and Robusto who has experience racing Legends cars.

Rajah Caruth will become the first driver with an iRacing background to be selected for the program. He is a product of



# Patrick County Now A Second Amendment Sanctuary

**Cory L. Higgs**  
*Contributing writer*

In a unanimous vote Monday, and against the advice of legal counsel, the Patrick County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution making the county a Second Amendment Sanctuary.

Patrick now is among a handful of localities in Virginia and localities in other states, to adopt similar resolutions.

County Attorney Alan Black said some of the wording contained in the resolution is prohibited by state laws.

One of the sticking points in the document was that the county will oppose efforts to unconstitutionally restrict rights provided by the constitutions of the U.S. and Virginia. The resolution also stated the county would not use public county funds to restrict Second Amendment rights or to aid in the unnecessary and unconstitutional restriction of those rights.

“You can’t pass a resolution like this unless such resolution is authorized by the statute. The resolution, as written, is prohibited by this (15.2-915) statute,” Black said.

Officials in Appomattox County declared it to be a Second Amendment Sanctuary in a Monday vote. Similar resolutions have been approved by governing boards in Carroll and Campbell counties, according to Lock Boyce, of the Mayo River District.

“If there is some problem with the resolution, can we at least send a letter to the governor’s office pointing out to him that some, not all, but some of his proposed gun legislation could wind up making felons out of many people in Patrick County, and that areas of this county are different from other areas in the state.”

Black said a letter would be an acceptable alternative to the resolution.

Boyce said that while he agreed with “some of what the governor wants to do, it was some of the other things, like not allowing children under the age of 18 to possess, handle or have a firearm” that prompted him to support the resolution. A ten-round clip proposal “is just not going to work in Patrick County, I don’t think, and there were some other things that I didn’t like,”

he said.

“I think the strongest part of it was that he (Gov. Ralph Northam) was going to allow localities to make gun control legislation on their own that would be more severe than what the state law requests,” Boyce said. “That would be alright because I think what applies to Patrick County doesn’t necessarily work well in inner city Richmond or in Fairfax County,” Boyce said.

“That last comment is exactly what this statute prohibits,” Black said.

But, if approved, it would “allow the localities to make and pass more severe gun legislation, but also allow places like this not to pass more severe legislation because it doesn’t fit our population,” Boyce said. “It doesn’t fit what goes on here. In a rural county like this, you need legislation that is more realistic than what some in the new legislature and the governor himself have proposed, and that was the whole idea behind this resolution.”

A new regulation regarding ten-round clips doesn’t apply in Patrick County, Boyce said. “To a certain extinct, background checks” on the transfer of firearms also would not apply. “I can’t give my child a gun without having to go dig up” a Federal Firearms License (FFL), Boyce asked. “That seems a little excessive to me, so I think if we just write a letter that just pointed out to the governor that there are differences in the environment for firearms between Patrick County and the rest of the state or large areas of the state. We’re not a suburban or urban area. I think what’s happening is this resolution or something very similar to it, which you say we can’t pass legally, will eventually be passed by most of these other localities,” Boyce said, adding that many localities in Indiana and Illinois also have adopted similar resolutions.

Jane Fulk, of the Dan River District, said “if all we can do is a letter, then I suggest we do a letter. I didn’t have any problem with the resolution, but if it’s not legal, I think we should go on and do the letter.”

Crystal Harris said she strongly supports the Second Amendment.

“Just a letter may not do,” said Harris, of the

Smith River District. “We need to let him (Northam) know that we support the Constitution and our Second Amendment. Legal or illegal, this is not right. We need to speak out and let him know we support our Second Amendment and that we will fight for it.”

Black recommended that the county consider addressing specific proposals rather than adopting the boiler plate resolution.

Karl Wiess asked whether counties that previously approved the resolution were in violation of state law.

“The resolution itself violates that statute,” Black said.

“If they’re in violation, I’m ready to get in violation too,” said Weiss, of the Blue Ridge District and vice board chairman. “I suggest we pass this resolution as written. If they’re going to haul us all off to jail, Carroll County and the rest of the counties, I’m ready to go too. But I suggest we pass it as written.”

Rickie Fulcher said the resolution did not state that the county would not enforce the law.

“It’s simply saying that as a body, this body is supporting the Second Amendment right of the citizens of the United States as well as the citizens of Patrick County. All we’re doing is making a statement from the governing body that we uphold the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution for the right to hold and bear arms, and it needs to pass,” said Fulcher, of the Peters Creek District.

“It says we will resist efforts by the state to restrict Second Amendment rights,” Black said, and reiterated his recommendation that the board address specific proposals.

“That seems a bit cumbersome, and looking over this, it says we’re just going to resist any infringement of the Second Amendment. ... It doesn’t say we’re not going to enforce the law. If the state passes a law, then we will have to deal with that law. All we’re doing is making a statement that we uphold the Second Amendment,” Boyce said.

“I say we join our neighbors in doing everything we can do to stop this,” Weiss said.

The motion to approve the resolution was unanimously approved.



**Caroline Vernon, an 11th grade student attending Patrick County High School, was among the first-place winners of the Virginia War Memorial’s Essay Contest. She read her essay aloud at the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond. she is congratulated by Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, who was the keynote speaker for the annual program.**

## PCHS student among essay contest winners

Caroline Vernon, a Patrick County High School junior, was among the first-place winners in the Virginia War Memorial’s 2019 Veterans Day Student Essay Contest.

The essay topic was “A Virginian Who Served in The Military in the 20th or 21st Century Who Inspired Me.”

Vernon’s essay profiled her brother, Justin Vernon.

“The amount of selflessness and courage required for this field is extremely high and not for just anyone. I cannot imagine leaving my family for months at a time to go to a foreign land. Veterans give their lives every day so that we as Americans can live in peace and freedom,” Vernon said of her brother, who served as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer in Iraq.

“Like all veterans of the United States, Justin has a heart of gold. He has always believed in me and everyone around him. Being in the military is not just any job. It is one of the most important occupations that exist in America and demands strength, integrity, and a passion for what you love the most, our

country,” Vernon said as she read aloud her winning essay as part of the Commonwealth’s Veterans Day Ceremony.

Vernon participated in the Commonwealth’s Veterans Day Ceremony held Nov. 11 at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond. She also was congratulated by Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, who was the keynote speaker for the annual program.

Lisa Belcher is Vernon’s teacher.

The annual contest is open to middle and high school age students throughout Virginia in public or private schools or homeschooled.

The student writers of the winning essay in each category receive a cash prize of \$250 and were invited to read their essay aloud during the 2019 Commonwealth’s Veterans Day Ceremony. Their teachers were also invited to Richmond, and each received a \$100 prize to be used for classroom supplies.

All of the first place and runner-up essays are posted online on the Virginia War Memorial Foundation website at [www.vawarmemorial.org/learn/contests-scholarships/essays/](http://www.vawarmemorial.org/learn/contests-scholarships/essays/).



**Vernon is pictured with her teacher, Lisa Belcher.**

## NASCAR

from page 9

the eNASCAR IGNITE Series – a first-of-its kind esports competition created to identify young talent by providing a low barrier of entry to the sport.

NASCAR Drive for Diversity provides opportunities for women and minorities to pursue career opportunities in NASCAR in the driver’s seat and on pit crews through the NASCAR Drive for Diversity Development Program and off the track through the NASCAR Diversity Internship Program.

The 2020 NASCAR Drive for Diversity Driver Development team includes:

Chase Cabre: The 22-year-old from Tampa, Fla., will join Rev Racing for his fourth-consecutive racing season and compete in the ARCA Menards Series East. Cabre won twice in 2019 in the NASCAR K&N Pro Series East.

Rajah Caruth: In just 42 starts, Caruth, 17, of Washington, D.C., has twice won races in the eNASCAR IGNITE Series, driving the Chevrolet Camaro ZL1/Ford Mustang. Additionally, he earned two heat wins with Rev Racing in the 2019

Bojangles’ Summer Shoot-out at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Perry Patino: The 20-year-old, Montgomery, Ala. native will join Rev Racing for the first time with one Limited Late Model win at Montgomery Speedway and the 2018 Limited Late Model championship under his belt.

Isabella Robusto: The 15-year-old won the Bojangles’ Summer Shootout in the Semi-Pro class in 2019 and finished second in Semi-Pro points. The Fort Mill, S.C., native was honored with the Young Racer award at the 2018 NASCAR Drive for Diversity Awards.

Nicholas Sanchez: The 18-year-old Miami native returns to Rev Racing for his fourth-consecutive season after winning at Myrtle Beach Speedway and Langley Speedway in a Late Model Stock Car in 2019.

Gracie Trotter: Denver, N.C. native, Gracie Trotter, 18, returns to Rev Racing as the 2019 Winter Heat Series champion at Charlotte Motor Speedway. She also won Round 5 of the Bojangles’ Summer Shootout in the Semi-Pro Division.

## NFPA report finds Thanksgiving is the leading day for home cooking fires

More than three times as many home cooking fires occur on Thanksgiving Day as on a typical day of the year. That is according to the latest U.S. Home Cooking Fires report recently released by the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA), which shows that there were 1,600 reported home cooking fires on Thanksgiving in 2017, reflecting a 238 percent increase over the daily average. Unattended cooking was the leading cause of these fires.

“With people preparing multiple dishes, often with lots of guests and other distractions in and around the kitchen, it’s easy to see why the number of home cooking fires increases so dramatically,” said Lorraine Carli, NFPA’s vice president of Outreach and Advocacy. “Fortunately, the vast majority of cooking fires are highly preventable with a little added awareness, and by taking simple steps to minimize those risks.”

According to the NFPA report, cooking is the leading cause of home fires year-round, accounting for almost half of all US home fires (49 percent) and reported home fire injuries (45 percent). Cooking is the

second-leading cause of home fire deaths, accounting for 22 percent of all fire deaths. The report also shows that less progress has been made in reducing deaths from home cooking fires than deaths from most other fire causes. There were more cooking fire deaths in 2013–2017 than in 1980–1984, despite total home fire deaths falling by 46 percent over the period.

Following are tips and recommendations from NFPA for cooking safely this Thanksgiving:

Never leave the kitchen while cooking on the stovetop. Some types of cooking, especially those that involve frying or sautéing with oil, need continuous attention.

When cooking a turkey, stay in your home and check on it regularly.

Make use of timers to keep track of cooking times, particularly for foods that require longer cook times.

Keep things that can catch fire like oven mitts, wooden utensils, food wrappers, and towels at least three feet away from the cooking area.

Avoid long sleeves and hanging fabrics that could come in

contact with a heat source.

Always cook with a lid beside your pan. If you have a fire, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner. Do not remove the cover because the fire could start again. Let the pan cool for a long time. Never throw water or use a fire extinguisher on the fire.

For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed. Only open the door once you’re confident the fire is completely out, standing to the side as you do. If you have any doubts or concerns, contact the fire department for assistance.

Keep children at least three feet away from the stove. Kids should also stay away from hot foods and liquids, as steam or splash from these items could cause severe burns.

In addition, NFPA strongly discourages the use of turkey fryers, as these can lead to severe burns, injuries, and property damage. For a safe alternative, NFPA recommends grocery stores, food retailers, and restaurants that sell deep-fried turkey.

NFPA is a global, nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards.