

## HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, September 11, 2021

(USPS-6)

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**The Commission on Local Government (CLG) heard testimony from city and county officials on the issue of reversion. From left: Policy analyst Cody Anderson, CLG staff J. David Comny, Commissioner Dr. Ceasor Johnson, Commission Chairman Dr. Stephanie Dean Davis, Vice Chairman Diane M. Linderman, Commissioner Rosemary Mahan, Policy Analyst W. Legrand Northcutt, and Policy Analyst Grace Wheaton.**

## Majority of speakers push back against reversion

**Callie Hietala and Debbie Hall**  
*Staff writers*

After two days of testimony from city and county officials, residents had an opportunity Wednesday to weigh in on Martinsville's effort to revert to a town status – and the message was clear: Delay or stop reversion entirely.

The Commission on Local Government (CLG) set aside four hours for public input during its series of hearings in Martinsville. A few of the more than 20

speakers supported reversion, but the majority said public input was left out of the process.

Martinsville Schools Superintendent Zeb Talley said his monthly meetings with city officials pre-dated reversion. He said he asked about reversion during those meetings and was told about

See **Reversion**, page 7

## Veteran-owned brewery opens its doors in Collinsville

**Callie Hietala**  
*Staff writer*

Jake Abel has been all around the world, but he came back home to open a brewery. After a year and a half of brewing and building, he saw his dream realized when Scuffle Hill Brewing Company opened its doors on September 1.

Abel said that ties to the community are what separates Scuffle Hill Brewing from other craft breweries in the area. Even the name, Scuffle Hill, has

deep ties to area history.

The brewery takes its name from General Joseph Martin, who named the first plot of land he owned in Henry County Scuffle Hill because he had to scuffle to come up with the money to buy it. Able had to do the same—most of his life savings are invested in the brewery.

Community ties continue to the menu, as well. The flagship blonde ale, called The Big Chair, takes its name from the

See **Brewery**, page 6

## Remembrances planned for 20th anniversary of September 11 attacks

Several events are planned to commemorate the anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks, which occurred 20 years ago this year.

City Council member Danny Turner, Sheriff Steve Draper, and the Martinsville-Henry County's Chamber Partnership for Economic Growth (C-PEG) have organized A Moment of Remembrance, set to begin at 11 a.m. at the Martinsville Uptown Farmers' Market.

The event, organized to thank first responders, will include speeches by former congressman Virgil Goode and State Sen. Bill Stanley, R-Moneta. A flag and remembrance ceremony for Jonathan Bowling, a city police officer killed in Afghanistan, is included in the event.

Meal vouchers, will be presented to first responders, may be redeemed for a free meal in Uptown Martinsville restaurants.

Martinsville Mayor

Kathy Lawson, her husband, and a group of volunteers will place 165 flags in the Uptown area in commemoration of the day.

Later that evening, the third annual Emergency Services Parade will begin in downtown Bassett at 6 p.m. The public is encouraged to line the streets to show their support for M-HC's local heroes from Martinsville and Henry County's emergency services, including fire, EMS, police, and 911 communications staff will bring the parade in downtown Bassett along Fairystone Park Highway. The route continues down Virginia Avenue, Memorial Boulevard, and Greensboro Road before ending at the Martinsville Speedway, where visitors will have a chance to meet local responders and take pictures with emergency vehicles. A moment of remembrance to honor those impacted by the 9/11 attacks is included in the event.

## Famed military unit reactivated, bring research lab to Martinsville museum

**Callie Hietala**  
*Staff writer*

The storied Monuments Men unit of World War II has been reactivated for the modern age, and part of their new operation, the Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab (CHML), is headquartered in Martinsville at the Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH). This lab allows its director, VMNH Assistant Curator of Archaeology Dr. Hayden Bassett, to use state-of-the-art satellite technology to monitor the condition important cultural sites all around the world and, when necessary, coordinate with military personnel during active missions from a virtual command center at the Museum.

The historical Monuments Men were a group of 345 men and

See **Research Lab**, page 8



**Dr. Hayden Bassett, Assistant Curator of Archaeology at the Virginia Museum of Natural History and director of the Cultural Heritage Monitoring Lab receives a satellite communication from a soldier assessing an ancient Mayan site in Honduras.**

## Parents, students speak out against mask-wearing in Henry County Schools

**Callie Hietala**  
*Staff writer*

Mask-wearing in Henry County Public Schools was the central topic of debate and discussion at the Henry County School Board's most recent meeting.

Though not on the board's agenda for the evening, the topic was brought to the forefront by a small, but vocal group during the public comment period of the meeting.

Despite board chairman Tom Auker's pro-

nouncement at the beginning of public comment that "we are here to listen to you, not to engage in a question and answer period or a debate," board members answered questions and responded to comments (some of which were shouted) from the audience, discussed the issue, and invited further public input from those who had not signed up to speak resulting in the first hour of the meeting being almost entirely devoted to the issue.

Samuel Smith of the Ridgeway district was the first to address the board.

"I'm not going to sit here and say that I think COVID is a fake disease or virus," he began. "I understand it's real, I had family members that have had it." He said that only one of his children has gotten mask breaks (oppor-

tunities during the school day in which students can remove their masks) while in school, and then only because he has a doctor's note citing his issues with asthma. When he pulls his mask down below his nose or otherwise isn't wearing it properly in the classroom, Smith said his son is harassed by his teacher.

Smith's wife Jessica, who also spoke, said that on the third day of school they took their son to the emergency room because he was suffering from high blood pressure, nausea, and a migraine. He now has a prescription at the school because "wearing the mask is causing his migraines to be worse."

Samuel Smith, a welder who wears masks for his work, said he deals with carbon dioxide (CO2)

See **Parents**, page 2



**Samuel Smith of the Ridgeway district addresses the Henry County School Board (from left) school board attorney Mike Gardner, Henry County Schools Superintendent Sandy Strayer, Thomas Auker, Francis Zehr, Terri C. Flanagan, Dr. Merris Stambaugh, and Benjamin Gravely, about the mask requirement in the school system.**



**The first prototype bench, designed by Ed Dolinger and Jake Smith, is installed in front of the Blue Ridge Regional Library in Martinsville.**



**Artist Ed Dolinger in his Bassett studio.**

## Bus stop benches will bring a pop of color to public transportation

**Callie Hietala**  
*Staff writer*

Anyone driving by the Blue Ridge Regional Library in Martinsville recently might have noticed a recent addition near the front entrance. A bright blue bench, its back in the shape of an open book, with scenes from Dr. Seuss adorning the open pages. This bench is the first of several and marks the beginning of the end of a project more than a year in the making.

In January of 2020, Piedmont Arts hosted a program called AIR:Shift, developed by the AIR Institute of Berea College. According to its website, the AIR Institute "provides rural and under-resourced communities with programming that inspires new connections and ignites the creative economy. Creative people expand business

skills, businesspeople get more creative; they learn to collaborate, adapt, and thrive together."

More specifically, Shift Workshops, like the one hosted by Piedmont Arts, are three-day programs that use "hands-on collaboration, design thinking, and business planning to help grow creative communities and economies."

Ed Dolinger, an long-time artist living in Bassett, participated in the Piedmont Arts AIR:Shift program. He recalled that participants were divided into two groups and charged with developing community-based projects that met various goals. After what he described as a delightful two days of collaboration and brainstorming, his group of seven came up with a small public art project—installing artistic benches in

See **Benches**, page 5

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

(Event information/calendar items must be received by 5 p.m. on the Tuesday before the desired publication date. Email to [dhall@theenterprise.net](mailto:dhall@theenterprise.net))

## Saturday, Sept. 11

The Bassett Heritage Festival, in Bassett, gets underway at 8 a.m. with a pancake breakfast to benefit the Stanleytown Ruritans. Festival vendors will be set up by 10 a.m.

A moment of remembrance will be held at 11 a.m. at the Martinsville Farmer's Market in honor of the anniversary of September 11. Featured speakers include former congressman Virgil Goode and State Senator Bill Stanley.

Fido's Finds at 119 East Main Street, UpTown Martinsville will hold a BIG BASEMENT SALE on Friday, September 10 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Saturday, September 11 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. to benefit the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA. Thousands of items are at rock bottom prices. Come save money while saving animals.

The third annual Henry County Emergency Services Parade will begin at 6 p.m. Show your appreciation for fire, EMS, law enforcement, and 911 communications along the parade route and at the Martinsville Speedway to support local responders and honor those impacted by 9/11. Parade begins on Fairystone Park Highway in downtown Bassett, continues along Virginia Avenue to Memorial Blvd., Greensboro Road, and finally ends at the Martinsville Speedway.

## Sunday, Sept. 12

The Henry County Bike Club's Sunday Road Ride begins at the Ridgeway Library at 2 p.m. Bring your bicycle and join in. For more information call Tommy at (276) 618-0343.

## Monday, Sept. 13

The Martinsville City School Board will hold its regular meeting at 6 p.m. at City Council Chambers in the

Martinsville Municipal Building, 55 W Church Street, Martinsville.

## Tuesday, Sept. 14

The Virginia Employment Commission will host a virtual job fair for the Western Virginia area, including Martinsville, Danville, South Boston and Roanoke from 1-5 p.m. This is an opportunity meet hundreds of employers with thousands of jobs. To register, visit [www.vec.virginia.gov/find-a-job/job-fairs](http://www.vec.virginia.gov/find-a-job/job-fairs) to register.

The Martinsville City Council will hold its bi-weekly meeting at 7 p.m. in the City Municipal Building.

## Friday, Sept. 17

Miles in Martinsville will host the Harvest Moon 8K & 5K. Starting time is 6:30 p.m. Participants may pick up their packets on Friday, September 17 from Noon - 4 p.m. at the YMCA - 3 Starling Avenue; and from 5 - 6 p.m. at the Gazebo on Depot Street. No race day registration. Runners are strongly encouraged to register online at [www.milesinmartinsville.com](http://www.milesinmartinsville.com). COVID-19 protocols in effect. The races start and finish at the Gazebo on Depot Street. Runners will follow the Uptown Connector Trail to the Dick & Willie Passage. They then run along the Dick & Willie Passage to a turn-around point, before returning to the finish. A course map with details is shown at [www.milesinmartinsville.com](http://www.milesinmartinsville.com).

## Saturday, Sept. 18

The Bassett Hwy 57 Cruise-In will take place from 3-7 p.m. in downtown Bassett. See hundreds of classic cars and enjoy great food and live entertainment.

## Sunday, Sept. 19

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will present a lecture, The Hairston Family Homes: Exploring 18th and 19th Century Architecture in Southern Virginia. The speaker is local historian and collector Jarrad Marlowe,

1st Vice President of the George Waller Chapter of the Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. Marlowe will discuss the history of the architecture of the George Hairston family, owners of the Beaver Creek Plantation and other properties. The talk begins at 3 p.m. Admission is free.

## Saturday, Sept. 25

The Martinsville-Henry County Relay for Life will take place at the Smith River Sports Complex from 3-7 p.m. The 5k event begins at 9 a.m. Visit [relayforlife.org/MHCVA](http://relayforlife.org/MHCVA) for more information or to register.

## Tuesday, Sept. 28

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold its monthly meeting at 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Room of the Henry County Administration Building, Collinsville.

## Friday, Oct. 1

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society celebrates its final First Friday of the year from 6-9 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse (1 E. Main Street, Martinsville) with a special performance from the band Midnight Pony. There will be cornhole, a cash bar with proceeds benefitting the Historical Society, and more! Free for all to attend.

The world premiere of the film "39 Ghosts" will be held at the Spencer-Penn Center at 7 p.m. Made by Myron Smith, the movie was filmed in Martinsville. Attendees will be able to meet with cast and crew. Tickets are \$13 in advance or \$15 at the door. There is a reduced rate for groups of five or more. Visit [39Ghosts.TicketLeap.com](http://39Ghosts.TicketLeap.com) or call (276) 409-0865 for more information or to buy tickets.

## Thursday, Oct. 7

The Henry County School Board will hold its monthly meeting at 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Room of the Henry County Administration Building, Collinsville.

# Parents

from page 1

daily and worries about the amount of CO2 intake while wearing a mask.

"Parents are taking it upon themselves to purchase CO2 meters and air purifier meters," he said.

Jennifer Jones, of the Blackberry district, said she has both children and grandchildren in Henry County schools.

"Upon visiting the CDC.gov to study the mask study," she said, "I was unsurprised to find the top cited studies were nothing more than a few months snapshot of what the virus was doing. The number one study is of two hair stylists wearing masks while working with clients in 15-minute intervals in the month of May. The number two study is of 124 Beijing households within the months of February and March. That's only two months. This is not at all how a decisive public health study is conducted. So, where's the logic in following the CDC, a private group?"

Jones said that prior to mask mandates, "such masks were only used in operating rooms or for visiting very seriously ill patients."

Addressing school board member Dr. Merris Stambaugh, she said, "I know you probably didn't wear a lot of masks before 2020. No studies were needed to justify the practice since most understood viruses were far too small to be stopped by the wearing of masks. It was also understood that long mask wearing was unhealthy for wearers for common sense and basic science reasons."

In conclusion, Jones said "masks are not FDA approved. Under the Nuremberg code, no one may be coerced to participate in a medical experiment, so I am putting the school board, which really should be under Governor Northam, on notice."

The Rev. Tyler Millner used some of his time at the podium to encourage and thank school officials "for all the effort by the system to keep our children safe and to help to mitigate the spread and escalation (of COVID-19). For myself and others, we are grateful for the effort and want to encourage the system to do everything that our children in particular be protected and safe, because there is no vaccine for them."

In May, the FDA approved the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 12 and up. Currently a vaccine is not approved for children under 12.

Overall, parents expressed concerns that their children's school experience was being affected by mask-wearing. Some agreed with previous statements that masking was affecting the health of their child, citing headaches, nausea, and even vomiting. The lack of mask breaks in classes was brought up by several parents, as were reports of bullying or harassment by teachers if a child was wearing their mask improperly or not at all. Almost universally, parents who spoke at the meeting

## Friday, Oct. 15 through Saturday, Oct. 16

The Blue Ridge Regional Library in Martinsville will be hosting a book sale at the library from 1-5 p.m. Oct. 15 and 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Oct. 16.

## ONGOING

MHC Coalition for Health and Wellness offers no contact Medicaid application assistance for eligible Virginia residents from birth to 64 years of age. No sign-up fees, no premiums, no deductibles. Including Children's Medicaid/FAMIS, Pregnancy Medicaid and Adult Health Care -19 to 64 years old. Questions can be answered, and applications completed by phone. In-person application assistance is available from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursdays at The Community Storehouse.

Call or text Ann Walker 276 732-0509 to see if you qualify.

The Henry County Adult Learning Center offers free in-house and online classes to help prepare for college, career, or earn your high school equivalency or GED. Classes can help improve your digital literacy, job skills, English language skills, and earning potential. Contact the Center for Community Learning (15 Primary School Road, Collinsville) at (276) 647-9585.

Two exhibits are on display at Piedmont Arts now through October 9. Artists Charlie Brouwer and Jennifer L. Hand collaborated Leaves of the Tree, a unique exhibition based on life-giving trees. Narrative by Nature features work from artists Leslie Pearson and Jennifer Reis.

The Martinsville Farmers' Market is open every Saturday from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. through November 20 and Wednesdays from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. through September 29. Shop with SNAP/EBT and receive up to \$20 in free fruits and vegetables each week. To shop market vendors online, visit [martinsvilleuptown.com](http://martinsvilleuptown.com).

## Bassett club donates to Hunters for the Hungry



**The Kiwanis Club of Bassett recently donated \$500 to Hunters for the Hungry to help with operating expenses for the organization that supplies harvested processed game meats to food banks in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Gary Arrington (left), director of Hunters for the Hungry, receives a \$500 check from Kiwanis Club of Bassett member Mark Martin.**

### CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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**CLUES ACROSS**

- It governs Federer and Nadal's sport
- Golden apple tree
- Central Mexican river
- Horn
- Egg-shaped
- With tooth
- French modernist painter
- Disprove
- Painful intestinal obstruction
- Baby shoes
- Make the grade
- Type of screen
- Christian fraternal organization (abbr.)
- Computer giant
- When you hope to

**get there**

- Corporate executive title (abbr.)
- Shout of welcome or farewell
- Imaginary awards for good deeds
- A citizen of Iran
- It can be sounded
- Making dirty
- Romanian city
- Baking ingredient
- Share a common boundary with
- Succulent plants
- Penny
- Jr. U.S. Senator Paul
- "Laurie Partridge" actress Susan

**CLUES DOWN**

- A type of bomb
- Pacific island country
- Earth is one
- A place to gather around
- Expressed opposite views
- Group that lives near Siberia
- Ore deposit
- Language related to Eskimo
- Narrative piece of music
- The distance covered by normal stride
- Glycoprotein hormone (abbr.)
- Mathematical term (abbr.)

- Popular beer
- Jabbing
- Historic Swedish castle
- Humorous expressions
- Christmas and New Year's Day each have one
- Filled up
- Nerve that serves the forearm (abbr.)
- One of British descent
- A way to get at
- Food-related allergic reaction
- Group of arteries near the pelvis
- Picked up
- Being three in one
- Obscene
- Dravidian language
- Growl

# Waiting week reinstated for unemployment benefits as of September 5, 2021

The unpaid “waiting week” for unemployment insurance (UI) was reinstated as of Sept. 5. The week is the first week of a claim. Claimants must claim the week and meet all eligibility requirements, but no one is paid for that first week. The first payable week will be the second week of a claim. Weekly claims may be submitted

by calling 1-800-897-5630 or by visiting [www.vec.virginia.gov](http://www.vec.virginia.gov). In March 2020, Gov. Ralph Northam waived the waiting week policy for all Virginia unemployment claimants as part of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency declaration. The reinstatement coincides with the end of temporary Federal benefit programs on September 4, 2021.

Claimants can learn more about waiting week and eligibility at <https://www.vec.virginia.gov/node/13501>, or more information about UI and other VEC services, visit [www.vec.virginia.gov](http://www.vec.virginia.gov).

# Health district looks to hire community workers

**Taylor Boyd**  
*Staff writer*

The West Piedmont Health District (WPHD) is currently advertising for three community health workers positions in Patrick and Henry counties, and the City of Martinsville.

Public information officer Nancy Bell said the purpose of these positions is to have local people help with getting education out to various communities about the safety of the vaccine, and to try and encourage others to take the vaccine.

“It’s my theory that people are tired of me, the government, and the governor telling them what to do. We want people in the community that know their own people who they trust to go into the community and get some of the unvaccinated, vaccinated,” she said.

Bell said the district received \$1.5 million for its COVID-19 response due to low vaccination rates.

Requirements to apply for the position include a high school diploma, heart for people, ability to travel, and reliable transportation. The job description is available on the United Way of Henry County & Martinsville Facebook page and on the WPHD website.

Bell said encouraging people to get vaccinated is the top priority of the organization because nonvaccinated people make up most of the COVID-19 cases in the county. Variants also make up roughly about half of the cases in the district.

“At this time, it’s just a matter of folks not being willing or able to get the vaccine. We want to help those who are willing, but not able, anyway we can - with transportation or anything else,” she said.

Bell said this is particularly important because an increase in COVID-19 cases is expected following the Labor Day weekend.

“Anytime people get together in groups, and holidays are a perfect example, it seems like we get a little uptick, sometimes a significant uptick, in cases,” she said.

To help prevent the spread of the virus, Bell said the recommendations of mask wearing, social distancing, and extra hygiene precautions are encouraged when people feel the need to gather.

“The vaccine is still the most effective way of thwarting the virus. It’s free, it’s accessible, and it works,” she added.

Bell said the health district is also currently giving

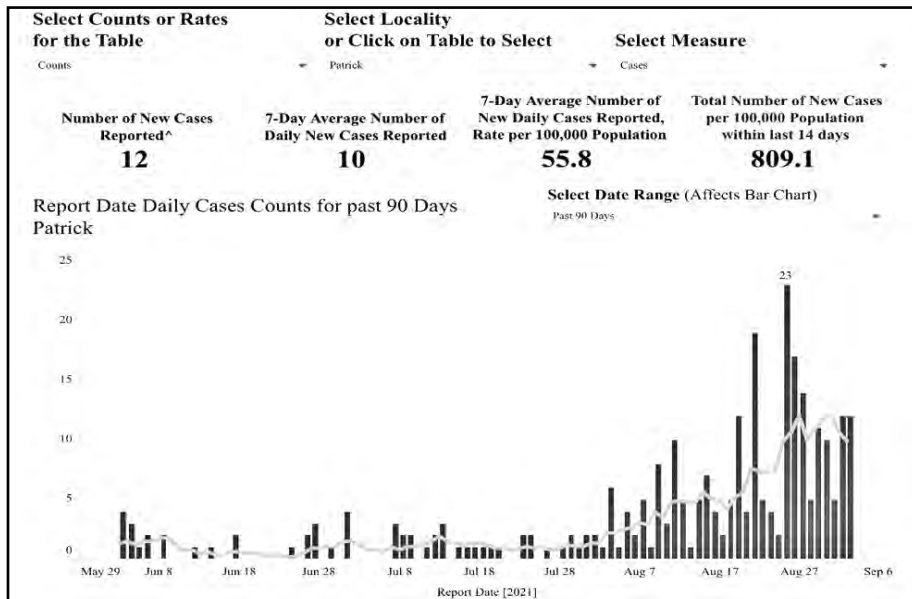
people with immunocompromised types of conditions a third Pfizer vaccine. The district plans to start scheduling booster shot appointments by the end of September for those who had their last shot eight months ago. The third vaccine (booster) will be available at local pharmacies, free clinics, and doctors’ offices.

Bell said more people are also getting tested for COVID-19, partially because schools and some companies are requiring tests for students and adults coming out of quarantine, or those who remain unvaccinated.

“Do not go to the hospital, emergency room, or to the health departments. We don’t test. We don’t have the capacity to test,” she said. Instead, visit a pharmacy, doctor, or purchase a self-test kit.

As of September 2, 33.6 percent of the population, or 5,925 people, were fully vaccinated in Patrick County; 38.1 percent of the population received at least one dose, and 39.7 percent of the adult population was fully vaccinated.

In Henry County, 39.6 percent of the population, or 20,028 people, were fully vaccinated; 45.9 percent of the population has received



**According to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) website, cases of COVID-19 in Patrick County have been steadily rising since the beginning of August. Nancy Bell, public information officer for the West Piedmont Health District (WPHD), said cases are expected to rise following Labor Day weekend.**

at least one dose, and 47.2 percent of the adult population were fully vaccinated.

As of September 7, 34 percent of the population, or 5,995 people, were fully vaccinated in Patrick County. 38.6 percent of the population has received at least one dose, and 40.1 percent of the adult population is fully vaccinated.

In Henry County, 40.1 percent of the population, or 20,261 people, were fully vaccinated. 46.5 percent of the population has received at least one dose, and 47.6

percent of the adult population is fully vaccinated.

Also on September 7, information from the Virginia Department of Health suggested there are 5,445 cases, with 407 hospitalizations, and 130 deaths in Henry County. In Patrick County, 1,704 cases with 125 hospitalized, and 47 dead from the COVID-19 virus were reported. In the City of Martinsville, 1,807 cases were reported with 180 hospitalized, and 81 dead.

The data also suggests

there are 788,917 cases in the state, with 34,312 hospitalized, and 11,947 dead from the COVID-19 virus. Information from the CDC suggested there are 39,831,318 cases in the United States and 644,848 dead from coronavirus.

Data also suggests that as of September 7, 4,894,969 Virginians have been fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus.

For more tips on how to stay safe, visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov) or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov).

# SNAP emergency allotments to continue in September

Virginia’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will again release emergency allotments of benefits to eligible households this month. Benefits will be automatically loaded to recipients’ Electronic

Benefits Transfer cards on Thursday, September 16. The emergency allotments raise existing SNAP households’ monthly benefit amount to the maximum allowable based on household size as follows:

Household Size	48 States and DC
1	\$234
2	\$430
3	\$616
4	\$782
5	\$929
6	\$1,114
7	\$1,232
8	\$1,408
Each additional person	\$176

The enhanced SNAP benefit is made available through a public health emergency declaration that requires government agencies to request an extension of emergency allotment issuances on a month-to-month basis. Accordingly, the status of future emergency allotment benefits will be determined by this monthly approval process.

SNAP participants with questions related to their benefits are encouraged to contact their local department

of social services or visit CommonHelp at [commonhelp.virginia.gov](http://commonhelp.virginia.gov) to access account information. For additional information regarding SNAP, how to apply, and other assistance programs, visit [dss.virginia.gov/benefit/](http://dss.virginia.gov/benefit/).

For streamlined access to other critical and actionable resources from 2-1-1 Virginia, CommonHelp, and other state and federal agencies, visit [COVID.Virginia.gov/app](http://COVID.Virginia.gov/app) to download the COVID-19 Virginia Resources mobile app.

# CDC gives Virginia funds to support COVID-19 response, recovery

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) awarded more than \$4.3 million to the Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI), which applied for funding on behalf of the Virginia Department of Health and a host of collaborating partners, to expand the roles and capacity of community health workers (CHWs) in supporting COVID-19 response and recovery in the Commonwealth. The funded effort entitled, Community Health Workers for a Healthy Virginia (CHWs for a Healthy VA), will also explore innovative financing strategies to help build and sustain the CHW workforce long-term. The CDC grant is part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act of 2020.

Community health workers are front-line public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have an unusually close understanding of the communities they serve. These trusting relationships enable CHWs to conduct community outreach, provide health education, offer social support, and facilitate access to community resources effectively.

As required by the CDC, the Virginia initiative will focus on geographic areas of Virginia with high rates of COVID-19 identified by project partners. Those areas include parts of the Richmond metro region, Norfolk, Portsmouth, the Danville area, and the Southwest Virginia communities served by the Mount Rogers Health District. Through the grant, community-based orga-

nizations, health care providers, local health departments, and other partners will hire and deploy CHWs, and IPHI will assist with training and provide technical assistance. Public health approaches utilizing CHWs will address gaps in access to COVID-related services, such as testing, vaccination, and quarantine support, and respond to community needs that have been exacerbated by COVID-19, such as access to health and mental health care, housing services, and food assistance.

“For a variety of reasons COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on some communities including urban African American and LatinX communities and rural communities in Southwest Virginia,” said State Health Commissioner M. Norman Oliver, M.D., M.A. “Community health workers on the frontlines, embedded in communities, have a unique view of community and individual needs. Developing the community health worker workforce has been a priority for Virginia for many years, and this grant is a big boost to our efforts.”


“The Institute for Public Health Innovation is honored to lead this important effort on behalf of Virginia Department of Health and so many other partners across Virginia,” said IPHI President and CEO Michael Rhein. “It’s exciting to see the federal government make these investments in CHWs in Virginia and across the country. CHWs are an essential aspect of any state’s action to eliminate disparities and inequities in public

health.”

IPHI, VDH, and their partners will work within priority communities and populations to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, support community recovery and resilience, and implement demonstration projects to test financing models to sustain CHWs and community resource providers. The goals for pilot communities include increasing primary care service use and access to community services among high-risk populations, decreasing emergency room visits and hospitalizations, and reducing healthcare

spending. CHWs for a Healthy VA will support the front-line pandemic response and recovery efforts. It will also promote long-term community health by creating replicable and sustainable financing models that will strengthen and permanently reinforce the CHW-workforce throughout Virginia.

The CARES Act allocated funds to the CDC to train and deploy CHWs to respond to COVID-19 efforts and to build and reinforce community resilience. The CHWs for a Healthy VA will serve more than 1.6 million residents in Virginia.



## LIVESTOCK AUCTIONS

EVERY SATURDAY AT 1 P.M.

- We sell cattle, goats, sheep & pigs.
- State Graded Feeder Sale every Saturday

For directions to our facility, weekly updates of upcoming events and current sale prices, please visit our website:  
[www.springlakeauctions.com](http://www.springlakeauctions.com).

Please feel free to call us at  
**(540) 297-1707.**

*We appreciate your business!*

1069 SICKLE COURT, MONETA, VA 24121

# Parker reappointed to commission

Barbara B. Parker, of Collinsville, was reappointed to Gov. Ralph Northam’s administration.

Parker, who is director of the For Alison Foundation, serves on the Virginia Commission for the

Arts.

Kristen Westover, of Lee, was appointed to the Board of Trustees A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership - GENEDGE Alliance. Westover is the president of Mountain Empire Community College.

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news and photos to

[newsreporter@theenterprise.net](mailto:newsreporter@theenterprise.net)



# OPINION

## The Herman Cain Award

For several years now, I've been a member of the website Reddit. For those unfamiliar, Reddit, according to Wikipedia, "is an American social news aggregation, web content rating, and discussion website." Basically that means it's a big internet forum where people post everything from news stories to videos of cats, and other people can upvote or downvote this content and comment on it.

Ah, but Reddit is so much more than that! Content on Reddit is broken down into "subreddits," which are basically smaller forums that focus on just one topic. Do you have a favorite TV show you want to discuss with fellow fans? There's a subreddit for that! Do you love old Pontiacs? There's a subreddit for that! Are you a Nazi? There are, unfortunately, multiple subreddits for that, which is the main reason Reddit makes the news these days. I suppose it's hard to run a sprawling internet forum without drawing out some of the worst people in the world.

However, if you know where to look, there's some great stuff on Reddit. I'm subscribed to a number of subreddits. Some of them just focus on funny content, others focus on news, others focus on my various nerdlly interests, and others just focus on animals

being cute. We need that more than ever right now.

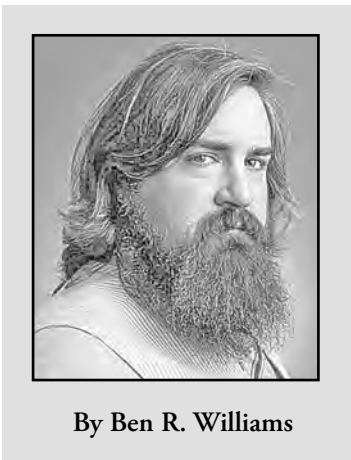
Recently, however, I subscribed to a new subreddit. It's called "HermanCainAward."

For those who don't remember, Herman Cain was a businessman who famously saved the Godfather's Pizza franchise. He also famously ran for president in 2000 and 2012, ran for Senate in 2004, and was responsible for one of my favorite campaign ads of all time in which his mustachioed campaign manager talked about how Herman Cain was going to save America and then casually smoked a cigarette right during the middle of the commercial. It's great, look it up on YouTube.

Herman Cain, a cancer survivor, also famously opposed the use of face masks during the pandemic. On June 20, 2020, he attended a Trump rally in Tulsa and was photographed without a face mask, surrounded by others without masks. On June 29, he tested positive for COVID. On July 30, he died of COVID after four weeks in the hospital.

So what, then, is the Herman Cain Award? It's a fictitious prize, awarded posthumously, to people who denied the dangers of the Coronavirus pandemic and then died of COVID.

If you get on Reddit and check



By Ben R. Williams

out the Herman Cain Award subreddit, you'll find plenty of threads detailing winners of the Herman Cain Award. Each one is different, but they're all fundamentally the same, virtually all of them stitched together from screenshots of the winner's Facebook account, usually 10-15 images.

Here's how the images break down:

-The bulk of the Facebook screenshots are images of anti-vax memes, anti-Fauci memes, and posts about conspiracy theories. You'll see a photo of Dr. Anthony Fauci with text superimposed over his face reading, "This is what a lying dog-faced pony soldier looks like." You'll see a photo of actor Sam Elliot in "The Big Lebowski," a man and a movie that truly don't deserve this shabby treatment, with text saying something like, "Tell me again

why I should be afraid of a virus that's so deadly that you have to be tested to find out if you've got it?" There will probably be a photo of some roaring lions with text indicating that the poster of the image is a lion and all these lily-livered vaxxed-up mask-wearers are sheep. There will also be posts about how the person isn't going to live their life in fear, they don't need a vaccine because they have a working immune system, no one has the right to tell them what to put in their body, and so forth and so on.

-Usually, the next Facebook screenshot will be the person saying they're not feeling well. This is known as "foreshadowing."

-The next screenshot will be an image of the person in the hospital, usually with a nasal cannula giving them oxygen. Often they'll say something about how "COVID is no joke, go get vaccinated." Other people double down and complain that the hospital isn't treating them right by refusing to give them the snake oil and livestock dewormer that they steadfastly believe will save their life.

-The following screenshot is someone close to the person, usually a spouse or a child, announcing on the person's Facebook page that they've been put on a ventilator and prayer warriors are needed.

-A few days to a week later, that same spouse or child will

announce that the person died of COVID. About half the time, this post will also announce a GoFundMe page for medical and funeral expenses.

I've read dozens upon dozens of these threads. Probably well over a hundred, if I'm being honest. But here's the thing you need to understand about the Herman Cain Awards:

I've barely scratched the surface.

There are hundreds of these threads. Thousands. And they're all virtually indistinguishable from one another. New threads are posted every few minutes. These are thousands of people whose lives ended identically: they denied that COVID was dangerous, they repeated all the same tired talking points, and then they caught COVID and died.

You might think it's morbid to read these threads, and I can't deny that. But I wish every anti-vaxxer would read them. I wish they would scan through dozens of Herman Cain Award winners, see the exact same talking points they themselves parrot back, and then see the end result repeated ad infinitum: a pointless, avoidable, inglorious death, experienced alone.

Because let me tell you, I've been seeing a whole lot of very promising candidates for the Herman Cain Award on Facebook just recently.

## A Time for Accountability

**Morgan Griffith**  
*9th District U.S. Rep.*

The ending of the war in Afghanistan has been a disgraceful and humiliating close to a lengthy chapter of our history. The chaotic, rushed, and abortive evacuation of Americans and Afghan allies amid the quick fall of the U.S.-backed government to the Taliban, which was ousted twenty years ago after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, will leave a legacy of death, fear, and failure. It did not need to be this way. American troops, our citizens remaining in the country, and our allies should not have suffered the extreme danger

of recent weeks that they did, and that 13 American servicemen and women died in a terrorist attack during the botched withdrawal, demands accountability from those whose decisions contributed to this calamity.

I believe this as someone who long called for a responsible end to America's longest war. The decision to withdraw did not produce this calamity; incompetent leadership from the Biden Administration did.

Therefore, I am calling for the impeachment of Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the resignations of Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley. These three officials bear the greatest share of culpability.

Secretary Blinken deserves impeachment as the official responsible for the lives of American citizens in the country. One of the State Department's roles is to protect our citizens abroad, but in Afghanistan it failed to rescue them from grave danger.

In July, as President Biden and Secretary Blinken expressed confidence in the Afghan government and security forces, American diplomats in Kabul were warning that the danger posed by the Taliban warranted the evacuation of Afghans who had assisted U.S. forces within weeks and the accelerated processing of their visas.

Instead, the Taliban rolled into Afghanistan's capital of Kabul, leaving the people needing

evacuation at their mercy. American citizens were left to navigate Taliban-controlled streets to get to the airport, as were our Afghan allies whose very acts of assistance to our country earned them the enmity of the Taliban.

The Wall Street Journal reported that upon the departure of American forces from the country on August 31, 100 to 200 American citizens remained left behind, as were "the majority of the Afghan interpreters and others who applied for visas to flee Afghanistan."

Unfortunately, the top officials at the Pentagon, Secretary Austin and General Milley, have hardly performed any better than those at the State Department. They were clearly unprepared for the quick fall of the Afghan government, leaving billions of dollars of equipment purchased by American taxpayers at the disposal of the Taliban and failing to direct an orderly final withdrawal.

The chaos at Kabul's airport created the conditions which allowed for the deadly terrorist attack of August 26, taking the lives of nearly 200 people including thirteen U.S. service members.

And after all this, officials in the Biden Administration have sought to take credit for a successful evacuation!

They would do well to remember Winston Churchill's observation that "Wars are not won by evacuations," but in any event, we must see clearly what happened: American citizens were left to fend for themselves under a regime whose forces have been fighting Americans for twenty years. Afghan allies who aided our cause at the risk of their lives are in the hands of our enemies. American troops were endangered by the hasty withdrawal, and thirteen paid the ultimate price.

That is not a successful evacuation. That is a fiasco, and it requires

accountability.

High public office is not an entitlement. Whatever these officials may have done for the country previously, and with respect for the military service of Secretary Austin and General Milley, responsibility for many of the serious failures of the final withdrawal from Afghanistan lies upon them.

Secretaries Blinken and Austin and General Milley have fallen far short in the performance of their duties, with tragic consequences. They no longer deserve to hold office on behalf of the American people. If President Biden does not recognize this fact, it is an indictment of him.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to call my Abingdon office at (276) 525-1405, my Christiansburg office at (540) 381-5671, or via email at [www.morgangriffith.house.gov](mailto:www.morgangriffith.house.gov).

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**Give us your view:**

The Henry County Enterprise encourages letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns. Letters must be signed and have a telephone number where you can be reached to be considered for publication. All letters will be verified before publication. The Henry County Enterprise reserves the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length, content and style.

If you have news about or an upcoming event for your organization, company or church, email [dhall@theenterprise.net](mailto:dhall@theenterprise.net) and/or call (276) 694-3101

## Elks at work in community



Martinsville 1752 participated in Bikers for Babies, an event to support the Pregnancy Care Center of Martinsville and Henry County, which included a bike run as well as included many vendors and community support groups, like the Elks.

The organization provided drug awareness materials to children and youth, which included silicone wrist bands reminding them

to Be Happy. Be Brave. Be Drug Free. Members also provided red, white, and blue silicone bands to adults for our support of veterans and the military.

Elroy the Elk was available for pictures with the children – and yes it was 95 degrees with 80 percent humidity. Twenty children also were registered for the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, funded in part by a Spotlight Grant.

Lester Properties on behalf of The Lester Group has begun construction of the center. Starbucks will occupy 2,500-square-feet of the facility that allows space for the chain to feature its new two-lane partner with Starbucks to bring their brand and services to the City of Martinsville and Henry County," Donna Morrison, VP of Lester Properties, said.

Construction of the building is projected to be completed West, Martinsville, VA 24112. Two other businesses will be joining Starbucks in the center. "We have a lease out for signature with one operation and another lease being finalized," Morrison said. "We will release soon."

Only one vacancy of approximately 1,800-square-feet remains and is located next to Starbucks. The Lester Group is proud to continue building upon its promise of growing material locations in Virginia, real estate developments and properties throughout Virginia and West Virginia, three lumber treatment plants in North Carolina and a door company in Virginia.

"Veterans are often used to being focused on helping others and show great resilience. However, they have also often faced many significant stressors," said Katie Foust, Suicide Prevention Case Manager and Licensed Clinical Social Worker. "We want them to know that reaching out for help is only an extension of their resilience, that there is hope for everyone, and that many excellent treatment options are available to them. The Salem VA Health Program, ongoing care from one of our amazing staff psychologists or social workers, or residential treatment, help is available."

Whether you're a Veteran or a Veteran supporter, there are many ways to reach out:

- \*Calling or texting a friend or fellow Veteran to talk about what they're going through
- \*Tapping into VA tools to get help when going through life's challenges:
- \*Call the Salem VA Outpatient Clinics to access care through Primary Care Mental Health Integration
- \*Call the Veterans and Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and then press 1 for 24/7 support from a trained responder who can also connect individuals directly to local Suicide Prevention
- \*Make the Connection, where more than 600 Veterans and family members share their stories of strength and recovery

If you are a supporter, reach out, offer support, and encourage the veterans you know to ask for help when they need it

VA also has resources to help veterans transitioning from the military or going through a difficult time in life. VA Solid Start connects veterans with qualified representatives who call three times during a veteran's first year of separation to walk through benefits available. The Self-Check Assessment is a confidential, any-

less or at risk of homelessness can get free, confidential support through the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans, where trained counselors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Veterans do not have to be registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care to contact the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans.

Veterans and loved ones can also find additional, external resources on the Substance Abuse and

REACH.gov/SPM.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, call the Veterans Crisis Line to receive free, confidential support and crisis intervention available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, text 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/) Chat. Veterans don't have to be enrolled in VA health care or registered with VA to use the Veterans Crisis Line.

These new assessments are timely in that they will provide teachers and other educators with baseline data showing exactly where students are in reading and mathematics as they state tests, students must take the growth assessments in school settings and under established VDOE security protocols. For this year only, the fall growth assessments are based on year. In the fall, mid-year, and spring. “I want to emphasize that the new growth assessments are not SOL tests and they will be noticeably shorter than other during student growth, the tests will not have a minimum passing score, and VDOE will not report aggregate growth results for schools and divisions. For the 2021-2022 school pencil tests will be developed for use in 2022-2023. More information on the new fall growth assessments is available on the Growth Assessments web page on the VDOE website.

the community. “Everyone assumed they’d buy generic, off-the-rack benches and artists would paint them,” Dolinger said. Dolinger, however, was included dance in their presentation. Ultimately, the judges split the \$10,000 project implementation money (provided to the program art department at Ferrum College. Together, they came up with a base design for the benches that, while easy to replicate, will still allow individual artists to ties.” Artists and art teams will be considered in two groups — those who have public art experience and those who do not. The final selections will be made by a small committee of experienced public artists and arts administrators. “I’m excited to get to that next step,” said Dolinger. Submission materials are due September 22, and finalists will be notified on September 27. Interested artists or groups should contact Ed Dolinger at [edolinger@yahoo.com](mailto:edolinger@yahoo.com).

“We could sing about it, we could dance about it,” Dolinger said. Ultimately, his group presented a short skit. The second group, whose idea was called Move and Groove and was centered on performing arts,



# OBITUARIES

## Cathy Barker Morrison

Cathy Barker Morrison, 68, of Axton, Virginia passed away Saturday, September 4, 2021, at SOVAH Health of Danville. She was born August 16, 1953, in Martinsville, Virginia. She loved flowers and her family.

She was preceded in death by her father, Grover W. Barker; mother, Eunice Kennett Barker; and sister Linda Barker Shively. She leaves behind to cherish her memories her devoted husband Jessie (Link) Morrison, daughter Angela Willis; son, Jessie (Brian) Morrison; sis-



ters, Sharon Fulcher (Late Bruce Fulcher) and Karon Flippin (Thomas); half-brother Keith Odberg; her loving grandson, Timothy Willis and numerous nieces and nephews.

A private memorial will be held at a later date.

Donations may be made to The American Heart Association. 3140 Chaparral Drive #106, Roanoke, Virginia 25018.

Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

## John C. Martin

John C. Martin, 70 of Martinsville, Virginia transitioned to be with the Lord on Wednesday, September 1, 2021, at SOVAH Health of Danville, Virginia. He was born July 16, 1951, in Martinsville, Virginia to the late Fletcher and Catherine Taylor Martin.

He was a faithful member, Sunday School Superintendent and board member of Mt. Bethel Pentecostal Holiness Church. John loved his church family and enjoyed caring for the church. He was known as a fun-loving devoted husband, father as well as father figure to many in his family circle. John was a graduate of the Class of 1969, the first class of Martinsville High School.

He was preceded in death by one brother Fletcher Martin, Jr.; two brother in laws Jesse Penn, Jr and Lee Edward Hairston.

Those left to cherish his memory include his wife of 50 years, Lillian Finnette Millner Martin; daughters LaDonna M.



Hairston and LaToya R. Martin of Martinville, VA; two grandsons Machaun (Tanesha) Moore, Jr of Atlanta, GA and Ishmael J. Hairston of Killeen, TX; 2 great grandchildren Jalil and Sage; four sisters Lois Diane Martin Hairston, Cheryl (Joerome) Morrison, Beryl Penn, and Levisa (Randolph) Yates; five sister in laws Monique Jamison, Neana Millner, Loretta Martin, Andrea Mullins Millner and Jolette P. Martin; a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

A celebration of life service was held Sunday, September 5 at GIPHC Carver Assembly building. Presiding Reverend Charles Whitfield and Pastor Monique Jamison eulogist. Burial was at Fair Haven Memorial Gardens.

Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

## Betty Sue Mabe

Betty Sue Mabe, 68, of Martinsville, VA passed away on Monday, September 6, 2021, at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. She was born on February 9, 1953, to the late Stafford Parcell and Effie Dalton Parcell. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, Claude Ray Mabe; siblings, Ann Meeks, Barbara Parcell, Louise Lovins, and Gray Parcell; and her grandson, Jacob Lawson.

Mrs. Mabe was a member of Clearview Baptist Church. She worked at Bassett Walker, Pluma and most recently at Stanley Furniture.

She is survived by her son, Claude Ray Mabe, Jr. (Jill) of Ridgeway,



VA; and daughter, Paula Lawson (Otis) of Martinsville, VA; grandchildren, Maegan Mabe, William Mabe, and Brody Lawson; and her beloved Shih Tzu's, Oreo, and Petie.

Visitation will be held from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturday, September 11, 2021, at Norris Funeral Services. A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. at Norris Funeral Services of Saturday, September 11, 2021, with Rev. Ron Gardner officiating. Burial is at Roselawn Burial Park.

Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, VA is serving the Mabe family. Online condolences may be made at [www.norrisfuneral.com](http://www.norrisfuneral.com).

## James Henry Jones

James Henry Jones, 86, of Martinsville, VA passed away on Monday, September 6, 2021, at his residence. He was born on March 28, 1935, in Martinsville, VA to the late Ben Jones and Elizabeth Mitchell Jones. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his siblings, Dorothy Jones, Gladys Bannister, Geneva Smith, Rubena Hayden, Evelyn Stanfield, Edith Jones, and Ben Jones, Jr.

Mr. Jones served in the United States Army during the Peace War and was a graduate of Albert Harris High School Class of 1953. James graduated from



Howard and Trinity University.

He is survived by his sister, Elizabeth Russell of Washington, DC; nephews, Robert J. Brown (Charlene), and Derek Brown both of Martinsville, VA. James is also survived by a host of nieces and nephews.

Memorial service will be held on 1 p.m. on Friday, September 10, 2021,

at Norris Funeral Services with Pastor David Deisher officiating.

Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, VA is serving the Jones family. Online condolences may be made at [www.norrisfuneral.com](http://www.norrisfuneral.com).

## Brewery

from page 1



Scuffle Hill Brewing co-owner and brewer Jake Abel pours a cold beer for a customer.



Tanya Martin (left), Martinsville City Council member Danny Turner, Henry County Board of Supervisors candidate Andrew Palmer, Jake Abel, W.C. Fowkes, and Henry County Public Relations and Community Liaison Brandon Martin celebrate the official opening of Scuffle Hill Brewing Company.



Martinsville City Council member Danny Turner (far right) presents a U.S. flag to Scuffle Hill Brewing co-owner and U.S. Marine veteran Jake Abel (middle) while Andrew Palmer (left) looks on.



Art by local artist Ashley King adorns the walls at Scuffle Hill Brewing.

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world's largest chair, manufactured by Bassett Furniture, which was once on display in Uptown Martinsville. A new 'big chair' has since been installed in the Uptown to commemorate the original. The Dick and Willie oatmeal stout is named for the railroad that once ran through Martinsville while the Tricorn IPA goes

back once more to the days when Joseph Martin was living in the area.

The current menu also includes pineapple seltzer, a historical beer style called the Kentucky Common, a Mexican-style beer called Da 'Rona, and a light American ale dubbed The Lawnmower.

Before he was the county's newest craft brewer,

Abel served in the Marine Corps from 2015 to 2019 as a Military Police officer. As a field MP, he did multiple deployments, including training Marines in Korea and then, in Mongolia, he trained Mongolian soldiers to support UN missions. He also served as presidential security for President Trump, working as security with Air Force One and coordinating with the Secret Service.

He fell in love with craft beer while stationed in San Diego, where, at the time, more than 150 craft breweries were in operation.

"It's the capitol of craft beer in America," Abel said, and added that he loved the experience of going to a brewery, seeing local acts perform, trying different beers, and "drinking beer with a friend and not having to worry about going to a bar where everyone's shouting over each other."

He decided he wanted to bring that experience to his hometown.

"My hometown doesn't have anything for the younger generation like myself to do," he said. "Instead of going to work for another brewer, I decided to come back to Henry County and invest in the county here and make this business."

He moved back home in November 2019 and, in that same month, started a program through Virginia Tech and the University of Richmond to become a certified beer brewer. Once his certification was complete, he got to work on the dream that became Scuffle Hill. Even while managing a new business and brewing all the beer, Abel is currently enrolled in Patrick & Henry Community College working toward a small business and entrepreneurship degree. After that, he plans to earn a degree in business admin-

istration.

All this work will go toward growing Scuffle Hill.

"There's so much more I want to do in here," Abel said. Eventually, Abel said he hopes to upgrade the barrel system to produce more beer and eventually, start distributing it. Toward the end of this year, he and his business partners plan to install televisions to show live sporting events. The business is already beginning to showcase live music and hope to grow that.

"We have a lot of events planned, we just have to get the community invested in us and be that community-oriented place that everybody wants to come," said Abel. "I think beer makes great friends. Come to Scuffle Hill. Make a friend or bring a friend. When you get off work and you want to get a beer and you want to chill out and talk, this is the place to be."

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# Reversion

from page 1



**Attorney Stephen Piepgrass, representing the City of Martinsville, delivers his opening statement. Behind him sits City Manager Leon Towarnicki. To his right are (from left), attorney Jeremy Carroll, representing Henry County; County Attorney George Lyle; and County Administrator Tim Hall.**

the June 2022 deadline. When he asked if he needed to be involved in the process, Talley testified he was told to “just move forward” with the school division because city staff were working on the reversion.

He also testified to monthly meetings with Henry County School Superintendent Sandy Strayer, and he noted that county school staff had access to all areas of city school facilities, contrary to testimony otherwise.

Donna Dillard, chairman of the Martinsville School Board, said that while the council had invited the school board to an August 21 meeting, “the meeting did not actually occur because of the school board’s commitment to transparency” and the city’s bid to meet in closed session. Otherwise, “our school board has not authorized or been involved in” the process.

Dillard asked the commission to extend the effective date of reversion in hopes the school divisions could work together and craft the best plan for education going forward.

Pastor Calvin Perry also encouraged the commission to recommend the city and county “take a step back, breathe.” He suggested each locality hold town halls to inform and educate residents, solicit input, and appoint boards/commissions of school administrators, teachers and students “to study the future of our students.”

The process hitherto “has been shrouded in secrecy. It has not been transparent” and residents have not “been educated on how it will affect them,” Perry said.

The Rev. Tyler Millner echoed many of Perry’s sentiments and encouraged the commission to “protect our interests. Protect our interests. We’ve been given bad leadership.” “This entire process has been done without any input from citizens,” former county school board member Mary Martin said. Although city officials and their legal representatives testified there was ample opportunity for public involvement, “I would challenge them to tell me when and where. We were closed down for a year due to the pandemic.”

Martin encouraged the commission to “just say no” to the reversion effort or at least not have it take effect until July 2024.

The CLG began the reversion proceedings on Tuesday, Sept 7, and heard testimony on the history of Martinsville and Henry County, population, demographics, tax rates and financial statistics.

Day one proceedings began with opening statements from attorneys on behalf of both city and county before devoting the rest of the day to hearing testimony.

Stephen Piepgrass of Troutman Pepper, attorney for Martinsville in the proceedings, said the city would be presenting evidence that answered two questions, “Why revert, and why revert now?”

“Demographics is destiny,” Piepgrass said, adding that that phrase is true when it comes to reversion. He cited an aging and declining population leading to a shrinking tax base, putting the city in an ever-worsening financial situation. “The status quo simply is not sustainable.”

Martinsville Mayor Kathy Lawson testified that, over the last several years, the city has drastically reduced its budget, cut back on staffing “to the point we can’t cut back anymore,” and is now treading water. She cited a recent study that showed that Martinsville’s fiscal stress is the third highest in the Commonwealth.

City Manager Leon Towarnicki agreed, adding that the city often must look hard before filling positions within the city that become vacant, and often must delay requests from services such as EMS due to tight budgetary restrictions. The city might, for example, receive a request from the police department for four new police cars, but the budget only allows the city to buy two, with a plan to buy two more the following year. By the time next year comes around, Towarnicki said, rather than asking for the two the department didn’t get last year, now they need five or six.

Piepgrass said that Henry County faces some of the same problems as Martinsville, including a declining tax base. “In our view, reversion will reduce fiscal issues and thereby achieve a sustainable future. The commission will agree that the time for reversion is now.

“This started out as an adversarial process,” Piepgrass said, referencing tensions between city and county as reversion began to move forward. However, “the result (of negotiations) is agreement instead of conflict.”

From the first day’s testimony, it was clear

that the one point of conflict still existed between city and county, - the issue of the actual date of reversion.

Piepgrass stated in his opening remarks that the city wants a reversion date of July 1, 2022, which is less than a year away. That begins the next fiscal year and, he said, will allow time for schools to adjust as well.

Henry County Administrator Tim Hall testified that was too soon.

“We have one chance to get this right,” Hall said. “The sheer size of this process is larger than any other the Commonwealth has ever seen.” He added that the county prefers a 2023 or 2024 date.

Jeremy Carroll, of the firm Guynn Waddell Carroll & Lockaby, is representing Henry County in the reversion proceedings. He said that this is the “largest and most complicated reversion in the history of Virginia” as well as the “most comprehensive reversion in the history of Virginia.” He noted that other cities in the state that have reverted had already partially consolidated some systems such as schools and courts. Martinsville and Henry County have each, up to this point, operated all those systems independently.

The county noted that several studies are needed to ensure the reversion process goes smoothly. The Voluntary Settlement Agreement, signed by both City Council and Henry County Board of Supervisors, makes a provision for a study of the school systems to be done. A study also is needed on office facilities, Hall said, to ensure that administrative officials have adequate office space to perform their duties. He added that the city’s requested reversion date is “absolutely not” sufficient time for a study to be properly completed and implemented.

“You won’t know what your needs are until you conduct your studies,” Hall said. “Those studies take some time to perform.” Even then, once a study is evaluated and the county’s needs identified, a budget has to be approved which will allow officials to meet those needs.

“If we have one chance to get it right, let’s take the time to get it right. I think the worst thing that we can do is to rush into something of this magnitude and this commitment if we’re not 100 percent sure that the path we are on is the appropriate path. And if that takes a little longer than perhaps the city wants, I think that’s a price that needs to be considered when you consider the holistic approach here.”

Time was a factor that attorneys for both sides returned to several times within the day’s testimony. Lawson testified that the current proceedings trace back to 2018 when the council invited representatives from other localities who have been through the reversion process to speak at meetings about their experiences—things that worked, things that didn’t, and how they thought the process could have been handled better.

“We began this journey in 2018. We believe that that is a four-year period. It starts with the next fiscal year, and that would avoid any disruption in the school system. Implementing reversion on that date will allow the town and the county to benefit from reversion sooner and waiting another year would just prolong the same situation and problems that we currently have that reversion is intended to address.”

Hall said the county did not begin planning for reversion at that point and did not consider beginning to budget for the process because there was no real indication that the process was going to move forward until the city filed the paperwork.

There was discussion of this in 1982, there was discussion of this in 2012. “At what point would the county be expected to jump in and start working? If we’d jumped in at 1982, that’s a lot of money we spent and nothing’s happening. If we jumped into it in 2012 with the understanding of the preparation that this was imminent, we’d still be waiting. We think we have done what’s in the best interest of the county taxpayer,” Hall said. “Once the city filed, we knew that it was on. It was time to get to work.”

The commission will accept written testimony that is submitted or postmarked by September 17. Email comments to david.conmy@dhcd.virginia.gov or mail to the Commission on Local Government Department of Housing and Community Development Main Street Centre 600 East Main Street, Suite 300 Richmond, VA 23219.

(For updates, visit [www.henrycounty-enterprise.com](http://www.henrycounty-enterprise.com) and upcoming print editions.)



**A map of industrial sites in Martinsville and Henry County is entered into evidence by attorney Stephen Piepgrass during testimony from Mayor Kathy Lawson before the Commission on Local Government.**

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Applications received by 7:00 PM on Friday September 24, 2021 may be eligible for a mobilization bonus. See the EVA posting for additional information, including contract requirements.

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# Research Lab

from page 1

women, many with backgrounds as curators, art historians, artists, museum directors, and librarians, who, from 1943 to 1951, worked to protect monuments and other cultural artifacts from destruction during World War II. Some were even on the front lines to locate and recover art and artifacts looted by the Nazis. Two Monuments Men were killed in combat. As the war came to an end, the Monuments Men helped to return more than five million cultural objects to their rightful home countries.

That legacy is the inspiration behind this new endeavor, the U.S. Army Monuments Officer Training (AMOT) program, which was announced in 2019. Bassett said that, though reactivating the unit had been an ongoing effort for some time, the looting of the National Museum of Iraq in 2003 spurred the Army into action. Corine Wegener, the director of the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI), was the uniformed cultural heritage professional on site to lead the initial response at the National Museum.

“Since then, it has been widely recognized that not only is there an intrinsic value to these types of preservation activities in armed conflict and natural disasters, but also an instrumental value for building relationships with a host of nations.”

The new group of Monuments Men (and women) is comprised of Army Reservists who, like the Monuments Men of the past, are museum professionals, conservators, archaeologists, or other cultural heritage specialists. The program itself is a partnership between the Army Reserve’s U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) and SCRI. Bassett was inspired to join after reading a 2019 New York Times entitled “The Army is Looking for a Few Good Art Experts.” He is now in the final stages of the two-year process of commissioning into the Army Reserves as part of the Monuments Men unit.

As the reactivated unit began to take form, Bassett said “we realized that it’s going to take more than just Army Reserve officers on their limited duty time to

accomplish” the mission. When he joined the staff at VMNH in 2020, Bassett said he volunteered to be the applied research lab to support unit operations through a partnership with SCRI.

“In World War II they had the exact same thing, an applied research lab consisting of volunteer librarians, curators, and art experts based at the Frick Museum in New York, and they were working full-time producing maps, actually delivering the research and information that the Monuments Men in the field in the Pacific and European theaters needed to accomplish what they were able to accomplish. We’re taking that as our model and applying it here. To my knowledge, we’re the only museum in the world with satellite tasking capability and advanced satellite communications.”

According to the museum’s website, the CHML “operates through a distributed workforce of archaeologists, art historians, GIS experts, and student interns. Among other technologies, the CHML utilizes high-resolution satellite imagery provided by industry partners to rapidly identify destructive events and active threats to monuments, museums, archives, historic buildings, archaeological sites, and landscapes.”

Currently, the lab is monitoring threatened cultural heritage sites in the Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Honduras. The Army builds partnerships with the nations it works with, training its own military personnel in site assessment work so that, eventually, the nations will be able to assess and protect those sites independently.

In 2020, Honduras, one of the partner nations, was hit by two hurricanes.

“We worked directly with NASA Jet Propulsion Lab,” Bassett said. “We received impact data from them from these two hurricanes, and we were able to model the countrywide impacts to cultural heritage sites for them. And from that, we produced 30 sites that are probable direct impacts.”

Recently, Bassett and a ground

team of Army Monuments Men officers, working alongside Honduran military, participated in their first live, in-field impact assessment mission using the CHML as a mobile command unit. The team was tasked with assessing the condition of two ancient Mayan sites—Dos Quebradas and Talgua. He invited the Henry County Enterprise for an exclusive look at the CHML and Monuments Men in action.

Bassett sets up in the parking lot of the museum, a blue pop-up tent is the only thing between him and the sweltering summer sun. On a plastic folding table is his computer, a cup of coffee, stacks of forms on which to record data transmitted by the ground team in Honduras, and a high-tech Iridium satellite phone. This is all he needs for his part of the operation. He opens a Zoom link with Dr. Kate Harrell, another Monuments Men colleague who will be assisting with the mission from Charlottesville. He pulls up high-resolution satellite imagery of the general location, overlays maps of the first Mayan site the team will be assessing and is ready to go.

A beep on the satellite phone alerts Bassett, via text, that the ground team has arrived in the town. Its members are making their way through the dense vegetation of Honduras toward the first location. “Copy,” Bassett texts back.

A bit later, another beep. This time, a message: “Confirm location.” This is followed by a set of coordinates. Bassett inputs the coordinates into the computer and confirms that the team has arrived at the first site of the day. Location confirmed, the ground team begins the site assessment.

Over the next several hours, the satellite phone beeps intermittently to let Bassett know a new message has come through. Sometimes, it is one of the soldiers asking for another location confirmation to ensure they haven’t wandered too far away from the site. Other times, though, it is to report that something has been found—a ceramic vase handle or sherd, evidence of animal burrowing, human activity.

Each time, Bassett fills out a

sheet noting the coordinates and what was reported. His counterparts in Honduras are filling out copies of those exact same data sheets as well. Then, he inputs the data into the satellite image of the site. When necessary, he instructs the ground unit to take further action. When erosion is reported, he wants to know how far away it is from Structure 2. If it’s too close, it could pose a potential threat to the integrity of the structure and action may need to be taken. When coordinates come through that show a soldier is too far from the designated evaluation area, he tells them how far away they are and which direction they need to walk to get back to the mission area.

Sometimes the messages come in fast, one after the other. Sometimes there are long periods of quiet. But that is the work of the day.

While the mission may seem like a simple one, it is part of several larger, overarching goals. Most immediately, it is a training mission for the host nation that Bassett describes as a “subject matter expert exchange.” Local Honduran archaeologists are working directly with Bassett and other U.S. experts to create a combined response and combined training.

“At the end of the day,” Bassett said, “when the next disaster happens, it’s ideally going to be the Honduran military personnel who have been trained to respond and record.”

On a broader scale, the methods being tested during this mission can be applied elsewhere, including areas of conflict like Afghanistan and Iraq, where some of the world’s oldest cultural sites and treasures are found. The methods being employed here, real-time communication between military in the field and cultural experts like Bassett, allow for fast action to be taken if needed.

“Decision-making involving cultural heritage is often limited to the time that personnel are on a site in these situations,” said Bassett. “Returning to certain areas is often not an option because of security, time, or fiscal constraints for those people on the ground

and in some cases, planning cannot wait for subject-matter-expert guidance before action is necessary. In this respect, windows of opportunity for preservation are often measured in the minutes and hours that a team is on site rather than the days or weeks after leaving a site and communicating that to a subject matter expert.”

Bassett said the CHML provided support during the recent withdrawal of U.S. military from Afghanistan.

“There’s a large team of cultural heritage professionals around the U.S. working on that. The leading institutions are the Smithsonian and the Penn Museum. We’re supporting by providing satellite imagery monitoring capability, so while they’re directly engaged with people on the ground, we’re the ones monitoring archaeological sites throughout Afghanistan and the National Museum in Kabul for any type of changes, impacts, evidence for looting, evidence for destruction.” Because of ongoing operations, Bassett could not share what the monitoring was revealing about the impact of the Taliban takeover.

So why did the U.S. military decide to invest time, money, and resources in reactivating the Monuments Men in the first place?

“A massive humanitarian response isn’t just going to involve living people,” Bassett said. “It’s also going to involve the infrastructure, which includes the cultural heritage of the country.”

“If certain aspects of cultural heritage just went away...” he trails off for a moment, thinking. “In Haiti, during the recent (earthquake), one of the largest impacts to that town was churches. So, if all the churches suddenly fell down, imagine what that would do to society. Regardless of your beliefs, there’s a major value in a civil society to having cultural heritage be part of everyone’s lives.”

The satellite phone beeps again, and Bassett goes back to work, eyes on his maps, phone in hand. Martinsville’s Monuments Man on the job, helping to protect and preserve culture all around the world.

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PHOTO BY THE HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

**Dr. Hayden Bassett records data received from the Honduran ground team on high-resolution satellite images of the Mayan site.**



**U.S. Army Monuments Men work alongside Honduran military personnel to assess an ancient Mayan site which may have recently sustained hurricane damage.**



U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY MARIA PINEL

**Monuments Men and Honduran soldiers perform an archaeological assessment of one Mayan site before sending their findings back to Dr. Hayden Bassett in Martinsville.**