

## HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

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**Andrew Palmer, a candidate for the Collinsville District seat, challenged the Henry County Board of Supervisors as a whole, and specifically his opponent, Joe Bryant, to take action to stop the reversion process at a Wednesday press conference outside the Henry County Administration Building.**

## Candidate issues challenge to board, opponent

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

A candidate seeking a post on the Henry County Board of Supervisors discussed reversion during a press conference Wednesday at the Henry County Administration Building.

The occasion coincided with the one-week anniversary of the Commission on Local Government's (CLG) public hearings on the issue. "It's pretty fair to say

that everyone that was there from Henry County was opposed to this measure," said Andrew Palmer, who is challenging incumbent Joe Bryant for the Collinsville District seat in November.

"Last week was the first time that any county or city residents were allowed to speak about this matter. As taxpayers of the county, we need a voice," said Palmer.

During testimony before the commission, Debra

See **Candidate**, page 2

## Longtime public servant Robert Crouch remembered

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

Former US attorney for the Western District of Virginia and longtime public servant Robert Paul Crouch, Jr., 73, died September 8, 2021.

Crouch came from a family with strong ties to the region. His father, a military man, was from the area and returned after his retirement. Both Crouch's father and mother were active in the community, recalled Roscoe Reynolds, former Virginia State Senator and close friend and neighbor of Crouch. The two men got to know each other when Crouch was working in Washington, D.C. in then-Sen. Bill Spong's office

A graduate of Drewry Mason High School, Crouch worked for a time at Fieldcrest Mills in North Carolina before he made his first foray into elected office, becoming Henry County's Clerk of Court in 1975. But, Reynolds said, Crouch "was challenged by seeing how lawyers were working in the court system and he left a very secure position with the clerk's office" during his second eight-year term to attend law school at the University of Virginia. He eventually returned to Martinsville to practice with the firm Young Haskins Mann

Gregory.

Ward Armstrong, a longtime friend and former minority leader in the Virginia House of Delegates, recalled that he met Crouch when they were both active in the Young Democrats. Crouch's wife, Clara, was Armstrong's first legal assistant when he opened his Martinsville law practice in 1981.

Both Crouch and Armstrong ran for the Democratic Party's nomination for the Virginia House of Delegates when candidate A.L. Philpott died mid-campaign. Armstrong said their race still holds the record for the most votes in a fire-house primary — 6,500 people came out to vote on a Saturday. By the time the votes were tallied, Armstrong won the nomination by a slim 200-vote margin. He remembers Crouch as a worthy adversary.

"We were very evenly matched," he said. Even though they were competing for the nomination, "we were on the same team." Armstrong added that he was proud both men ran positive campaigns and remained good friends.

"I know of no person who was a more dedicated public servant of the Commonwealth of

See **Crouch**, page 7

## Reversion: what comes next?

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

Past reversions may offer a glimpse into the Commission on Local Government's (CLG's) report on the City of Martinsville's proposed reversion to a town.

The commission convened in Martinsville last week to hear testimony from both the city and county, as well as to receive input from residents. During that testimony, the battle lines between city and county, drawn up primarily in closed-session meetings and legal negotiations, became publicly clear.

Although the two localities agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and a subsequent Voluntary Settlement Agreement (VSA), it was obvious during testimony that tensions

See **Reversion**, page 8



**About 100 people gathered at New College Institute on September 8 for the public hearing before the Commission on Local Government (CLG) on reversion. Of the 33 people who spoke to the commission, many indicated they felt left out of the reversion process.**

## Housing project in city moves forward

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

The Martinsville City Council voted 4-1 to approve policies and certifications related to the Pine Hall Road Community Development Block

Grant Project.

The city was awarded \$1,183,310 in funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the project. These funds, along with \$496,425 in matching funds from private and

local sources - mostly via in-kind support - bring the project's total to \$1,679,735.

The city is working with DHCD to develop a final contract, according to Mark McCaskill, director of Community Development. As part of

the contracting process, McCaskill asked the council to approve the first of several sets of policies and certifications.

Council member Danny Turner expressed concern about the language in the business and employee plan, which states, "This certifies to the greatest extent feasible we will take steps to encourage the hiring of lower income persons residing in the city for the activities that are funded with" Community Development Block Grant funds.

"This seems absolutely ridiculous that you would hire the least successful contractor to go into people's home to do work," Turner said. "If you had a successful contractor versus somebody that's not so successful, why wouldn't you go with the more successful one?"

See **Housing**, page 5



**City Council (from left: Tammy Pearson, Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles, Mayor Kathy Lawson, Danny Turner, and Chad Martin) listened as Mark McCaskill, Martinsville's Community Development Director, explained his interpretation of the wording in a policy related to the Pine Hall Road Community Development Block Grant Project.**



**The Davis and Haynes families visited past Mustangs players at an Arkansas vs. South Carolina college baseball game. Front (from left to right): Luke Haynes, Next Plan Athletics' Vice President April Haynes, Anna Haynes, NPA's Director of Baseball Operations Joe Haynes, NPA Director of Marketing Tonya Davis, Nathan Davis, Preston Davis, and NPA President Jason Davis. Back (from left to right): Kevin Kopps, Matt Goodheart, and Brady Slavens.**

## New firm steps up to the plate to manage Martinsville Mustangs

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

Next Plan Athletics (NPA) has taken over management of the Martinsville Mustangs and is swinging the fences with plans to engage the community at the team's Hooker Field.

At its August 24 meeting, Martinsville's city council voted 4-1 to award NPA the management contract for the city's baseball team. The newly formed LLC is comprised of Jason Davis, the company's president; his wife Tonya Davis, the director of marketing; Joe Haynes, the director of baseball operations, and his wife April Haynes, vice president of the company.

Though none of the four have any experience managing a baseball team,

they are supported by an advisory board which, according to Jason Davis, includes one former professional baseball player. The management team also has a long history in baseball. Both Jason Davis and Joe Haynes played baseball themselves, and the eldest sons of each couple have played baseball for years. The couples have also served as host families for previous Mustangs team members.

The company will also rely on the expertise of their head coach, Brandon Nania, an assistant coach for Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC). Nania stepped in as the Mustangs' head coach last season after serving as an assistant coach in 2020. Davis told members of city council that Nania has a unique and aggressive recruiting style, which will

See **New Firm**, page 8

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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)*

## Saturday, Sept. 18

Back the Blue Night at the Bassett Hwy 57 Cruise-In will take place in downtown Bassett. The event is to show support and appreciation for local law enforcement. It will begin at 2:15PM with the "B99.9 Ride to Back the Blue" starting at Cross Point Church in Ridgeway, VA and ending at the Bassett Hwy 57 Cruise-In. The ride will be a fundraiser for the Benevolent Funds of the Henry County Sheriff's Department, the Martinsville City Sheriff's Office, and the Martinsville City Police Department.

## 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.

A Parade for Literacy, 5 p.m. at the Martinsville Speedway. The event is presented by Martinsville City's and Henry County's Adult & Career Education. For more information, contact Lealice Hagwood (lhagwood@martinsville.k12.va.us) or Robin Gravely (rgravely@henry.k12.va.us)

## Monday, Sept. 20

The Patrick & Henry Community College Board will meet at noon at the MET located at 65 Motorsports Drive, Martinsville. This is a public meeting, but the board will not receive public comment.

## 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 for more information or to register.

## Tuesday, Sept. 28

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold its monthly meeting at 3 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. A cash bar, with proceeds to benefit the Historical Society, food provided by Hugo's, cornhole, 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. Reduced rate for groups of five or more. Visit 39Ghosts.TicketLeap.com or call (276) 409-0865 for more information or to buy tickets.

Blues, Brews & Stews will take place at 6 p.m. in the Gravely-Lester Art Garden at Piedmont Arts. Enjoy food, drinks and live music in the Art Garden. T.C. Carter Band will perform a blend of blues, country and rock. Ticket price includes Brunswick stew, cornbread, banana pudding and water/tea. Cash bar. Bring a lawn chair or blanket for seating. No outside food or drinks. In case of rain, Blues, Brews + Stews will be held at Piedmont Arts. Tickets are \$20 and are available at Piedmont Arts and PiedmontArts.org.

C-PEG and Martinsville UpTown are hosting First Fridays October 1, November 5, and December 3 from 4-8 p.m. at the Uptown Martinsville Farmer's Market. Join in as many of your favorite Oktoberfest vendors sell products the First Friday of October, November, and December! There will be

arts, crafts, food, and more!

## 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, VA.

Latin Ballet of Virginia will present Verde at 6:30 p.m. at Piedmont Arts. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for K-12 students. Verde is an immersive dance/theatre production focusing on the preservation and promotion of the sacred love and respect to planet Earth. Inspired by the exhibit, Leaves of the Tree, the performance will take place in the museum's galleries where the dancers and audience will be surrounded by falling leaves and a towering tree created by artists Charlie Brouwer and Jennifer L. Hand. Reception at 6:30 pm. Performance at 7 pm. Tickets available at Piedmont Arts and PiedmontArts.org.

## Saturday, Oct. 9

Household Hazardous Waste Day at the Bassett Service Center, 2285 Fairystone Park Highway, from 9 a.m. until noon. All residents of Henry County and Martinsville may drop items off that day. The event is not open for commercial business use. In addition to the usual items, residents may also drop off up to four boxes of paper for off-site shredding provided by EMI. No documents larger than 8.5" x 11" will be accepted.

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

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

## Friday, Oct. 22

Join Piedmont Arts for an opening reception in honor of the museum's new exhibits, Carl Chiarenza on loan from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Print/Imprint: Asheville Printmakers and Tools of Happiness. Gallery talk at 6:15 pm. Music by Amy Stuart and Ann Nichols.

# Candidate

from page 1

Buchanan, vice chairman of the supervisors, said that in the fall of 2013, the board adopted a legislative package requesting a referendum before reversion could become effective. The city opposed the legislation and successfully had it amended twice.

The bill eventually signed into law, "only requires that all five council members vote on reversion," Buchanan said, and added that a similar referendum was also requested in the county's legislative packages in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Noting potential legal

issues surrounding reversion, particularly in the dissolution of the Martinsville City School system, Palmer said, "there were several legal issues that were brought to the commission's attention on why the City of Martinsville and Henry County cannot dissolve the Martinsville City School operations. It was made very clear that this may be an unconstitutional act, and that the city and the county may be in violation of the Dillon Rule," he said.

According to the National League of Cities (NLC), the Dillon Rule

says, in essence, that local governments have only expressly granted powers, and if there is reasonable doubt if a power has been conferred on a local government, then that power has not been given.

He referenced Martinsville Circuit Court Clerk Ashby Pritchett's testimony during the public hearing that Martinsville City Schools cannot dissolve without a vote from the school boards, which, Palmer said, may be unconstitutional.

"I think it is a shame that neither Henry County or the City of Martinsville has

involved either school board about this matter," said Palmer. "I mean, aren't our children our greatest asset?"

Palmer also expressed frustration at the lack of action he perceives from the supervisors, particularly Bryant.

"Shouldn't legal counsel for Henry County be fighting harder for us? Why aren't they meeting in this room right now behind me? I want to know, why isn't Joe trying to stop this and help us," Palmer said.

Both Bryant and Buchanan voted against a Voluntary Settlement Agreement that eventually was approved by both county and city officials in separate votes.

Still, Palmer said that Bryant should be having conversations daily with members of Martinsville City Council and encouraging them to stop the reversion process. Palmer indicated that he has spoken with council members. He added that he feels at least two members are leaning toward reversing their opinions on reversion.

"You know that the City of Martinsville is going to annex Collinsville just as soon as they can," Palmer said. While a 10-year moratorium is included in the agreement, Palmer said an annexation would lead to double real estate taxes for Collinsville residents.

"I hereby challenge the Board of Supervisors to stop this process, hire another lawyer, if need be, and fight this," Palmer said. "If they won't, I will. Remember this great country was founded on 'we the people,' and I believe it's time for us residents of Henry County to stand up and say 'No.'"

Palmer questioned whether the board would want to stop the reversion process even if council changed its stance.

"Andrew is young, he's ambitious, and he can make statements like that because he's got nothing to lose," Bryant said when called

for comment. "He doesn't understand that a lot of the things we do, we don't put out in public. Andrew is so insistent that I don't do anything, but he just doesn't know what I do. He's not here to watch what I do."

Like Palmer, Bryant said he does not believe reversion is the right path forward.

"If I had it my way, then we wouldn't be here today talking about it. We would have seen them in court," he said of the city.

He and Palmer also agree that the school systems of both city and county should have a larger role to play in the reversion process.

Bryant said there is some truth to Palmer's claims that Martinsville will annex Collinsville "just as soon as they can," however, Palmer did not have all the facts, particularly in his claim that Collinsville annexation would lead to double read estate taxes for residents. "I can tell Mr. Andrew Palmer that absolutely Martinsville City is looking at taking up Collinsville, up to the Dutch Inn is what I have seen. They're not only looking to take that, they're looking to take the (Martinsville) Speedway,

they're looking to take the industrial parks, they're looking at possibly taking the Rural King, that area over there," Bryant said,

However, "they've stressed that they aren't interested in taking houses because of the fact that you don't get any revenue and they just want the businesses," he said, and noted his assertions are based on hearsay.

He said he also felt that Palmer's statements about the annexation of Collinsville are irresponsible.

"How can you make a comment like they're going to take Collinsville when you don't know for sure that they're going to take Collinsville, because I don't know for sure that they're going to take Collinsville," Bryant asked.

Regardless, Bryant noted a real discussion about annexation may be years away.

"We've got this annexation coming up in 10 years," he said. "We're not going to just sit there and take it. It's going to be bad for everybody. The reversion part we can probably live with, but annexation is what's going to kill us."

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
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	63	64				65				
		66				67				

- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Religion native to some in China
  - 5. Nursemaids
  - 10. Coats a porous surface
  - 12. Garment of long cloth
  - 14. Containing a broader message
  - 16. University of Dayton
  - 18. Patti Hearst's captors
  - 19. Insane
  - 20. Bristlelike structures in invertebrates
  - 22. Taxi
  - 23. Trainee
  - 25. Comedian Carvey
  - 26. Some couples say it
  - 27. Belong to he
  - 28. High schoolers' test
  - 30. Young goat
  - 31. You drive on one
  - 33. Denotes a time long ago
  - 35. Space between two surfaces
  - 37. By and by
  - 38. A way to sell
  - 40. A line left by the passage of something
  - 41. Indicates near
  - 42. Where wrestlers compete
  - 44. Prosecutors
  - 45. Body part
  - 48. Soluble ribonucleic acid
  - 50. Indicates silence
  - 52. NFL's Newton
  - 53. Ancient Roman garments
  - 55. Drunkard
  - 56. Expression of satisfaction
  - 57. Thus
  - 58. Noisy viper
  - 63. Plants of a particular region
  - 65. Communicated with
  - 66. Latches a window
  - 67. Swarm with
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Split pulses
  - 2. Ask
  - 3. Brew humbly
  - 4. Distinctive smells
  - 5. Digressions
  - 6. Partner to cheese
  - 7. Father of Araethyrea
  - 8. Made a cavity
  - 9. Tin
  - 10. Appetizer
  - 11. Presenting in detail
  - 13. Compound in guano and fish scales
  - 15. Cool!
  - 17. "\_\_\_ than a doornail"
  - 18. Popular literary form \_\_ fi
  - 21. Be the most remarkable
  - 23. "Final Fantasy" universe character
  - 24. Buffer solution
  - 27. Muslim physician using traditional remedies
  - 29. Fantastical planet
  - 32. S. American plant
  - 34. Domesticated animal
  - 35. The tops of mountains
  - 36. Expression of disapproval
  - 39. Skeletal muscle
  - 40. Game show host Sajak
  - 43. One's interests
  - 44. Identify the existence of
  - 46. Partner to "oohed"
  - 47. Does not accept medical help (abbr.)
  - 49. Hammerin' Hank
  - 51. Lowest point of a ridge between two peaks
  - 54. Elaborately draped garment
  - 59. Check
  - 60. Car mechanics group
  - 61. One point east (clockwise) of due north
  - 62. Austrian river
  - 64. A command to list files



Andrew Palmer was among those to address the Commission on Local Government during its public comment hearing on reversion last week. "I am against reversion," he told the commission.

# Mental health is focus of city school board meeting

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

Student mental health was the central theme to emerge at the regular meeting of the Martinsville City School Board.

Board members heard from school psychologist Dr. Travis Worrell on National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, the schools' Director of Pupil Personnel and Foster Care/Homeless Liaison Felicia Preston on the Virginia School Boards Association's Bullying Prevention Month, and from several Piedmont Community Services staff, including executive director Greg Preston, on some of their work to help reach students and staff alike.

Worrell told the board that, over the past decade, suicide rates among middle school girls have doubled, likely due to the introduction of social media. He said there has been an overall increase in social and emotional issues in school-aged children since the pandemic began, and that "at the high school and middle school level, the kids are old enough to really process suicide and what that means, and I know Ms. Scott, the counsellor there, is putting up flyers around the schools, she's talking about the Trevor Project, she's doing journal groups where the kids are writing things down, she's doing individual and group counselling to

talk about risk."

The Trevor Project focuses on suicide prevention among the LGBTQIA+ youth community.

While middle school students are having similar discussions to those in the high school, Worrell said discussions of suicide aren't yet age-appropriate at the elementary level. However, counsellors there are working on social-emotional learning skills, which include a check in, check out program for kids who are having a hard time—they can bookend their school day with conversations with an adult about how they're doing. Even at Clearview, Worrell said, youngest students are taught that adults care for them.

"One thing we've learned about suicide is having one adult outside the home that really cares for you is one of the best resiliency things that we can instill in a kid, and we're definitely say that we're doing that in Martinsville City," he said.

Martinsville schools also are working with a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support team on implementing a universal screening process for students, he said.

"For years, we've been screening for reading and math problems, hearing problems, all that stuff. We're starting to screen for social and emotional problems now, and this is something really nobody

in the state of Virginia is doing," Worrell said.

The program began in the early days of the pandemic, when everyone was asking how children were coping with isolation and virtual learning.

"Martinsville City was one of the few that said let's do something about it," Worrell said, adding that a checklist was sent home to each student to ask how they were feeling. As a result, three or four children in each school indicated that they were in crisis mode and needed to speak to someone right away. Counsellors responded, "and who knows what that saved," said Worrell. He added that the school system is preparing to roll out a universal survey which will screen students for a litany of issues, including social and emotional issues.

Felicia Preston said that bullying in schools also affects students' mental health and can lead to behavioral problems, health issues, negative school outcomes, drug use, and suicide. She noted that while October is National Bullying Prevention Month, prevention and negative effects of bullying are taught year-round in Martinsville schools. Counsellors work with students to make sure that they can feel safe in their schools.

Preston noted that Martinsville High School counsellor Kristen Scott created a student advisory committee to come up with ideas and



**School psychologist Dr. Travis Worrell (far right) talks with school board members (from left) George Dickens, vice chairman Yvonne Givens, chairman Donna Dillard and Schools Superintendent Dr. Zebedee Talley about National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. School board members Anthony Jones and Emily Parker participated via phone.**

activities for students. An Instagram page (@mhc\_student\_advisory) will be among the tools used to anonymously report bullying incidents or anonymously report anything students want to talk about. A physical box also is located at the high school for students to anonymously report incidents of bullying.

Greg Preston, of Piedmont Community Services, as well as several of his staff, focused on the importance of mental health and the services that Piedmont Community Services offers.

"We're here to help, and we're here to partner with the schools and with the community," Preston said.

"It's okay to ask for help," he said. "Don't be embarrassed by it. Please call and discuss any concerns that you have."

There are several

different hotlines provided by Piedmont Community Services, including an emergency mental health crisis line, a suicide prevention hotline, a student hotline, and more. All are listed on Piedmont Community Services' website, PiedmontCSB.org.

Greg Preston said he met with school superintendents in both the city and the county to discuss collaboration during the pandemic. The result of that meeting is a committee which is working to developing trainings, programs, and strategies to help teachers, staff, and students navigate the mental toll of the pandemic. The committee is made up of representatives from Piedmont Community Services, Martinsville City, and Henry County schools and will work to generate ideas and solutions to ensure teach-

ers' and administrators' mental health needs are being met and recognized, as well as those of the students.

In other matters, the board:

\*Heard from Shauna Hines, Martinsville City Schools' coordinator of STEAM, CTE, and Fine Arts, about the Canvas learning management system.

\*Heard from Jill Collins, coordinator of STEM, Math, and Science, about her experience with the Virginia Declaration of Learning Professional Development Program.

\*Approved minutes for board meetings from August 2, 17, and 21 board meetings.

\*Approved the financial report.

\*Approved minor language changes and updates in legal references to certain policies upon first and final reading.

## Alternating appointments, walk-in schedule to begin at DMV

Beginning October 5, Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) customers may choose to schedule an appointment for service or opt for walk-in service on alternating days at all 75 customer service centers (CSCs).

Appointments for service will be offered only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; and walk-in service will be offered only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Hours vary by office location.

"We are pleased to continue offering appointments in addition to walk-in service, since our customers greatly appreciate the convenience and efficiency appointments afford," said DMV Commissioner Richard

D. Holcomb. "Those who can plan ahead should schedule an appointment for service but, if in-person assistance is needed urgently, walk-in service will now be available two and a half days per week."

In accordance with Executive Directive Seven (as amended) to address the pandemic, the DMV began operating by appointment only as it reopened offices in May 2020 after a temporary closure due to the rapid spread of COVID-19. Operating by appointment has proven to be overwhelmingly popular with customers, 77% of whom said in a survey that they wished to see appointments continue. During the pan-

demic, customers shifted the way they do business with DMV in that more customers are taking advantage of online and mail-based services. DMV is conducting over 10% more transactions per week cumulatively through all service channels than before the pandemic. For the week ending September 4, 2021, customers completed 359,452 transactions across all service channels, as compared to the pre-pandemic weekly average of 309,111 total transactions.

At the direction of the General Assembly, the DMV will be integrating walk-in service back into its operations in addition to appointments. DMV

researched other state motor vehicle agencies' best practices through the pandemic and found that those offering walk-in and appointment service simultaneously were met with long lines and confused and dissatisfied customers. Based on research, surveys, experience, and the ongoing pandemic, DMV developed a hybrid service model on alternating days which will offer flexibility for customers and the agency.

Customers who have scheduled an appointment and instead decide to walk in for service should cancel that appointment to make it available for other customers. Walk-in service will be provided on a first-come, first-served

basis based on the type of transaction; customers should anticipate wait times. For the health and safety of customers and employees, lobby chairs will be spaced and all customers are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings.

Preparation is key to a successful in-person visit to a CSC, whether it is scheduled or not. Resources for preparation can be found at [dmvNOW.com](http://dmvNOW.com).

The DMV also continues to offer many service alternatives outside of the service centers. More than 50 transactions are available at [dmvNOW.com](http://dmvNOW.com) and many can be conducted by mail. Customers may obtain

vehicle-related services at DMV Select partner offices, most of which are operating by appointment only. Appointments can be scheduled for nearly every DMV service with the agency's mobile DMV Connect teams. Customers needing a title after purchasing a vehicle from an individual (not a dealer) may drop off their applications and supporting documents at CSCs. Staff will process the work and contact customers to pick up the title within five days. During the pandemic, customers changed the way they do business with DMV; as a result, most transactions conducted are by service methods other than in person at a center.

## Health officials say COVID-19 testing is widely available in region

Testing demand has recently increased across the western region, as cases of COVID-19 are rising due to the more contagious Delta variant. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) reminds everyone that many locations are available throughout the region and across the Commonwealth for individuals seeking COVID-19 testing.

All COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at preventing serious illness and death. While vaccination is the most effective strategy to protect individuals, families and communities, testing remains an important tool to help identify individuals with illness, protect those around them and monitor trends in COVID-19 infections.

"It's critical that we reserve our hospital emer-

gency rooms and rescue squads for medical emergencies, so if you're seeking a COVID test and it is not an emergency, please utilize other testing locations," said Laurie Forlano, M.D., deputy director, VDH Office of Epidemiology.

VDH recommends that the following people be tested for COVID-19:

Those with symptoms or signs of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status.

Those who have had close contact with someone known or suspected to have COVID-19.

Fully vaccinated people should be tested three to five days following a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, even if you don't have symptoms.

People who are not fully vaccinated should be

tested immediately after an exposure, and again five to seven days following exposure if the first test is negative.

Those who participate in activities that are higher risk for COVID-19 exposure (e.g. travel, attending large events where social distancing is not possible, or being in crowded indoor settings).

Those who have been referred for COVID-19 testing by their healthcare provider or the health department.

Those who plan to travel or who have recently returned from travel with some exceptions for fully vaccinated people.

Those who are not fully vaccinated and who plan to visit people at high risk of developing severe COVID-19.

Those who tested positive for COVID-19 within the past three months

and recovered do not need to get tested after exposure as long as they do not have symptoms.

VDH has partnered with Walgreens to provide Abbott BinaxNow Rapid antigen testing at no cost, at selected locations. Walgreens pharmacy team members will help you self-administer your COVID-19 test. Test results will be processed at the pharmacy and provided to patients within 24 hours. COVID-19 testing is available by appointment to adults and children ages 2 and older who meet screening criteria for testing. Make an appointment at [Walgreens.com/COVID19Testing](http://Walgreens.com/COVID19Testing).

Due to the current surge in COVID-19 cases, some testing locations may prioritize tests for symptomatic persons or persons with known

close contact to a person with COVID-19.

For questions about COVID-19 testing or a list of testing locations, visit the VDH website or call 877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682),

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

To schedule your vaccine, request a vaccination record or for more information on COVID-19 vaccines, visit [www.vaccinate.virginia.gov](http://www.vaccinate.virginia.gov).



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# OPINION

## Regarding the recent COVID superspreader event in Pittsylvania County

PRESS RELEASE — This weekend, come on out to the Foggy Mountain Amphitheater to see all your favorite rock acts of the last three decades (excluding the current one)! In defiance of all logic and reason, we're cramming 40,000 rock superfans into one location to enjoy the greatest music Top 40 radio had to offer a while back!

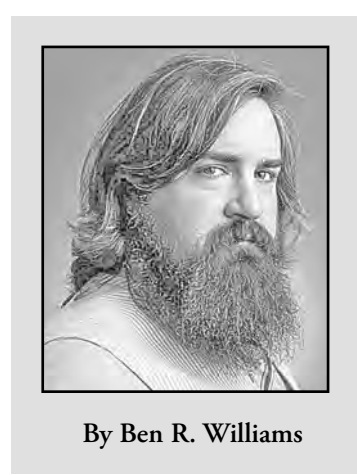
Who's going to be in attendance? How about 1Hit 1Der! They'll be playing their best-known (and possibly only) song "Lady, You're a Woman." Rapper Large Jimmy will be on hand to debut his newest album, "Need Money," part of his ongoing "I Shouldn't Have Hired My Entire Extended Family" tour. Need more? Shock rocker Rob Graves will be playing the entirety of his most popular album, "Spooky Hillbilly Skeleton Murder Concern."

Also, there will be a large number of grizzly bears.

The bears have escaped from a nearby wildlife rehab center and they are very large and very hungry. They have infested the Foggy Mountain Amphitheater and we cannot get them out. There are perhaps 40 of them, and they WILL kill and eat many dozens of attendees, possibly hundreds.

But hey, the bears aren't the only wild act appearing this weekend! Remember SUPERDOOM? Well, they're still touring and they'll be here. How about Daddy Cricket? Contrary to popular belief, they are ALL still alive and will be playing the greatest hits of 1999! D.U.R.T will also be here, and they WILL play ANYTHING for FIVE BUCKS.

We would also like to mention that the grizzly bears that have invaded the amphitheater were initially sent to the wildlife rehab center to be treated for radiation poisoning. They are all



By Ben R. Williams

highly radioactive, so even if you manage to stay as far away from them as possible, you might still become seriously ill. However, the radiation poisoning has not adversely affected the bears and has instead given them super-strength.

Hey, do you like camping? Well bring a tent and spend all four days of the Foggy Mountain

Rock Festival under the stars! Each attendee will be provided with three square feet of land on which to pitch their tent (note: land may be sloped at 45 degree angle or greater). We will also have 120 parking spaces (first come, first served). Don't want to park? No worries! Our shuttle service runs every six hours!

We should also note that shortly before wandering into the Foggy Mountain Amphitheater, the 40 radioactive grizzly bears encountered a downed Cessna 172 Skyhawk that had apparently been used for drug smuggling. The aircraft contained approximately 70 pounds of high-grade cocaine, all of which was eaten by the bears. While grizzly bears can normally hit a peak speed of 35 mph, we clocked one of these coked-up nuclear grizzlies running about 115 mph, so escape will not be an option.

But you know what will help get your mind off of your

own horrible impending death? Beer! At our beer tent, our staff are happy to provide you with America's favorite beer: Budweiser, served in a plastic bottle so you won't injure any of the local acts when you throw the empties at them. Just \$11 a bottle!

I should probably go ahead and wrap up this press release — I hear some sort of agitated clawing noise at my office door — but don't miss the Foggy Mountain Rock Festival this weekend! Remember: a ship in harbor is safe, but that's not what ships were built for, so don't be afraid to roll the dice on a chance at a horrible, unspeakable death in order to see the musical acts that you love because they were popular when you were 18 years old and you didn't yet fully grasp the concepts of responsibility or mortality.

Rock on!!!

## Griffith Remembers 20th Anniversary of 9/11

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

Twenty years ago, our nation was attacked by terrorists. Like many Americans, I remember where I was when I learned of the news on September 11, 2001.

As I worked in my law office that morning, my bookkeeper at the time, Terry Haynie, told me that a plane had struck a Tower of the World Trade Center. We could not understand how a plane could have gotten so off course that it could hit a building. Then we watched live as the second plane crashed into the South Tower, and we knew the United States was under attack.

I immediately went to K-Mart and bought an American flag set to install and to proudly fly that flag at my office. I wanted to display my patriotism and

my defiance to whom-ever our attackers were. We would later learn this despicable attack was the act of "extremist Muslim terrorists."

9/11 was the worst attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor, made more outrageous by the targeting of civilians. Almost 3,000 innocent men, women, and children died that day at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and on United Airlines Flight 93. More than 400 first responders gave their lives at Ground Zero in New York City, including police officers, firefighters, and Port Authority officers. First responders in New York City ran toward danger and they saved hundreds of lives. But in doing so, some made the ultimate sacrifice.

Often, when I walk into the U.S. Capitol, I am particularly remind-

ed of Flight 93, believed to have been headed to destroy the Capitol. Passengers on board Flight 93 were beating on the door to the cockpit to prevent its use as a weapon by actors of terror. Audio from a phone call made on the flight captured one hero exclaiming, "Let's roll." During the passengers' struggle to regain control of the plane, the terrorists chose to crash the plane. 40 men and women died that day when Flight 93 crashed in the Shanksville, Pennsylvania field. I am filled with sorrow for the innocent victims. They were travelers headed to destinations for work, play, or home and because of their bravery they became American heroes.

The evils of 9/11 still horrify, yet the acts of great courage that also occurred that day still inspire. Americans

showed that they would not cower in the face of terror. I am filled with immense pride in our nation when I reflect on the spirit shown by so many of my fellow Americans on that terrible day.

As Americans, we continue to honor the extraordinary sacrifice of those who perished on 9/11 and every citizen who protects our nation at home, including our state, local, and federal law enforcement. Throughout the 9th District, brave men and women continue to work every day to keep our communities safe. I am thankful for their service.

I recently witnessed emergency workers and first response teams in Buchanan assisting in the rescue efforts after devastating and deadly flooding. I thank all those working with Buchanan

first responders and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. Their efforts in assisting one of our communities did not go unnoticed in the Ninth District and beyond.

On this day, Americans must also remember our active troops who are fighting to protect our freedom. More people enlisted in the military in the 12 months following the 2001 attacks than they have in any of the 20 years since.

In the years after 9/11, more than 6 million young men and women would join the ranks of our armed services to defend our country. Today, more than 1.3 million young men and women remain on permanently stationed active duty, including nearly 173,000 service members stationed abroad.

May God bless our service members and their families and continue to bless the United States of America.

For so long as this nation endures, we as a country should never forget September 11, 2001.

As implied in my recent weekly columns, the "botched" exit has placed us into a position where terrorists may once again target the U.S. The hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan led to a chaotic end to America's longest war.

It is imperative that we keep actors of terror from breaching our borders again as they did on that chilling Tuesday morning in 2001.

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

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**Michael Showell, Publisher**

**Debbie Hall, Editor**  
dhall@theenterprise.net  
(276) 694-3101

**Callie Hietala, Reporter**  
newsreporter@theenterprise.net

**Randy Thompson, Advertising Manager**  
advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com  
(540) 230-1129

**Liz Moonbury, Advertising Specialist**  
advertising@theenterprise.net  
(276) 694-3101

## Knight graduates from Emory & Henry Health Sciences Campus

Erin Knight, of Collinsville, was among the 27 students to graduate from Emory & Henry's Health Sciences Campus on August 14 with a Masters of Physician Assistant Studies.

The event was held at the Lincoln Theatre in Marion, Va. "Class of 2021, we salute you," Emory & Henry Provost, Dr. Michael J. Puglisi said to the graduates. "You've persevered dur-

ing these unprecedented times, demonstrating great resilience and unwavering commitment to your goal of earning your degree. You have made many sacrifices and put in many long hours of studying, while also providing high quality health care to your patients during this global pandemic. We have no doubt that you will be true leaders in your chosen healthcare profession."

Emory & Henry College's Health Sciences campus was launched in 2014 with the goal of preparing compassionate, patient-centered, highly-skilled health care professionals who not only provide quality healthcare to their patients but also actively engage in leadership and service opportunities within their professional organizations and communities.

## Martinsville student named to SNHU President's List

Amber Duncan, of Martinsville, has been named to Southern New Hampshire University's summer 2021 President's List.

Eligibility for the President's List

requires that a student accumulate an academic grade point average (GPA) of 3.7-4.0 and earn 12 credits for the term.

Southern New Hampshire

University (SNHU) is a private, nonprofit institution with an 89-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Learn more at [www.snhu.edu](http://www.snhu.edu).

## Former county administrator died in August

Former Henry County Administrator Cecil "Lee" Lintecum, 74, died August 6.

A graduate of Drewry Mason High School, Lintecum became acting County Administrator in January 1981 and officially assumed the role in March.

Lintecum resigned his position in January 1992 and was honored with a plaque from the Board of Supervisors in February of that year in dedication to his service, according to Jim Adams, chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors.

Lintecum also served

for several years with the West Piedmont Planning District, "and did a bang-up job for them," recalled attorney Roscoe Reynolds, former Commonwealth's Attorney for Henry County and former Virginia State Senator. "He was always very

concerned about Martinsville and Henry County, trying to do what he could to make our community a better place."

Lintecum's legacy "will forever remain woven into the fabric of our communities' tapestry," said Adams.

# Vaccines endorsed, encouraged by city council



**Martinsville Mayor Kathy Lawson in a public service announcement encouraging city residents to get vaccinated.**



**Martinsville's Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles teamed up with Mayor Kathy Lawson to film a PSA on the safety, efficacy, and necessity of getting vaccinated against COVID-19.**



**City council member Tammy Pearson at a press conference announcing her incentives to encourage vaccinations.**

## Callie Hietala Staff writer

As case rates continue to climb, both in Virginia and nationwide, and the threat of the new Mu variant looms, members of Martinsville's City Council are stepping up to get a singular message out to their constituents: Get vaccinated.

At a recent meeting, the council adopted a proclamation recognizing the importance of COVID-19 vaccines for the health and safety of the community. It states, in part, that "statistics demonstrate the effective-

ness of the vaccine in that as the number of vaccinations increase, occurrences of Covid cases decrease and furthermore, a very high percentage of new cases, hospitalizations, and Covid-related deaths are among the unvaccinated."

The proclamation, which also recognizes the rights of citizens to make their own decisions regarding their health and wellness, concludes that council members "do hereby proclaim the importance of citizens participating in the vaccine program for their own personal health, the

health of their families, friends, and close contacts, and for the overall public health of our community, and encourage all citizens who have yet to be vaccinated to consider doing so."

Martinsville Mayor Kathy Lawson and Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles also filmed a public service announcement encouraging people to get the vaccine.

The COVID virus "is running rampant in our community," said Lawson in the PSA. "Please talk with your healthcare provider to get facts, not the fiction you see on social

media. Get yourself educated. If you're not vaccinated, please do so."

Bowles added that "over 90 percent of the new cases (of COVID-19) are of those who are unvaccinated. I'm here to encourage you to please consider taking the COVID-19 vaccination as it helps boost your body's immune system to protect and fight the virus. Please consider talking to your medical professional or your primary care physician to get the most accurate and detailed information about the virus. This can help you understand that

misinformation is happening across the globe but talk to someone you know and trust."

Both Lawson and Bowles end their segments with a variation of "I got my vaccine, have you?"

As previously reported, council member Tammy Pearson is offering a free barbeque sandwich to unvaccinated citizens who become fully vaccinated and challenged other local businesses to follow her lead in helping to incentivize the public to get vaccinated. Thus far, Pearson said, The Ground Floor, Hollywood Cinema, and

The Daily Grind have also offered their own incentives.

According to the Virginia Department of Health website, as of Tuesday, September 14, 48.3 percent of all Martinsville residents have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, while 61.9 percent of the adult population (18+) have received both of their shots (or the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine.) In Henry County, 40.9 percent of the whole population has been fully vaccinated, including only 48.5 percent of the adult population.

# McAuliffe rolls out "Virginia is for Vaccine Lovers" campaign

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe announced a new effort to get Virginians vaccinated against COVID-19 this week with his "Virginia is for Vaccine Lovers: Keeping Virginians Safe, Schools Open, and Our Economy Strong Through COVID-19 Safety and Vaccines" campaign. It is part of McAuliffe's twentieth comprehensive plan to get Virginians vaccinated and rebuild a stronger economy.

Part of the new plan is the deployment of public health workers to regions of Virginia with low vaccination rates, ensuring that Virginians have critical information about vaccine

safety, and using mobile vaccine clinics to make it easier for Virginians to get vaccinated.

"People need to understand that this is FDA approved, it's safe, and as you know in Virginia today if you go to any of our K-12 (schools), you have to take at least ten different vaccinations. This is safe. And if you get the vaccination, highly unlikely you will die," McAuliffe said.

If allowed to continue to spread and mutate, particularly through unvaccinated people, "at some point you could actually have a variant that is resistant to vaccines," McAuliffe said.

The COVID-19 pan-

dem is growing increasingly dire.

"Seventy-five percent of our ICU beds are full," McAuliffe said. In Southwest Virginia, 93 percent of those ICU beds are full.

His plan will incentivize businesses to mandate vaccines for their employees, encourage school divisions to require vaccines for all eligible personnel, and expand access to childcare and other programs to help address learning loss and help parents get back to work.

McAuliffe said those goals will be accomplished in part by using unspent funds from the American Rescue Plan.

"My opponent (Republican nominee Glenn Youngkin) is not for mandating any of this. He doesn't believe that children should be wearing masks in schools," McAuliffe said.

In a statement released in August, the Youngkin campaign said that "In addition to his opposition to statewide school mask mandates, Youngkin has repeatedly expressed his objection to vaccine passports and vaccine mandates. Youngkin has chosen to get the vaccine and believes that Virginians have the right to decide for themselves whether or not to get vaccinated based on their personal circumstances."

"I just think it's reckless," said McAuliffe of Youngkin's stance on mask-wearing. The virus "isn't going away any time soon, so we have to do everything that we

possibly can to keep our children in school, to build the strongest economy, and we've got to really get serious, and we've got to fight this deadly infection."



**Former Virginia Governor and current Democratic gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe announced his "Virginia is for Vaccine Lovers" campaign via Zoom.**

# Congressional staff to visit

U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith's Ninth District staff will be available in Patrick and Henry counties on Sept. 22.

Staff will visit a Conference Room in the Patrick County Administration Building from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The building is located at 106 Rucker Street in Stuart.

Griffith's staff members will be at the Bassett Public Library in Henry County from 2:30 to 4 p.m. The library is located at 3969 Fairstone Parkway in Bassett.

# Nominations now accepted for Outstanding Military Veteran award

Nominations are now being accepted for the Martinsville-Henry County Outstanding Military Veteran award, which will be presented to the nominee judged by the selection committee to best represent what service to the country and to our community means.

The award was created in 2009 by the Henry County Board of Supervisors at the suggestion of Board member Debra Buchanan. With the support of the Martinsville City Council, the award was expanded in 2013 to allow nominations of both

Martinsville and Henry County veterans.

Nomination forms are available from the Martinsville website - [www.martinsville-va.gov](http://www.martinsville-va.gov) and the County website - [www.henrycountyva.gov](http://www.henrycountyva.gov). They are also available at the City Municipal Building and the County Administrator's office. All nominations must be received at the City Manager's Office or County Administrator's Office by 5 p.m. on Friday, October 15, 2021.

The winner of the award will be

announced at the Veterans Day Service to be held at the HJDB Event Center on Thursday, November 11 at 11 a.m.

Previous winners include David Kipfinger and James Rogers (2009), Olaf Hurd (2010), Donald James Myers (2011), Herbert S. Gibbs and Winford "W.C." Fowles (2012), S.T. Fulcher (2013), Robert L. Hazlett, Jr. (2014), Thomas Spencer (2015), John R. Redd (2016), Walter E. Sheppard (2017), Warren "Sonny" Richardson (2018), Charles A. Washburn (2019) and David King (2020).

# Housing

from page 1

McCaskill explained that contractors would have to meet the qualifications laid out in the request for proposals (RFP), but the clause essentially means the city will make sure that contractors in "the low-to-moderate income areas of the city have ample notice that the contract is out there and can bid on the contract."

Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles said she understands the language is about having a more inclusive process, not, "oh, we're going to give it to the worst possible person. Absolutely not. We can't correlate lower income with least qualified."

"Hiring someone who has lower income does not mean lower quality work. That just does not

correlate," said Brandy Dudley, the Regional Planner in Housing for the West Piedmont Planning District Commission, who attended the meeting via Zoom.

"It does not mean they're the best quality work, either. I'd like for us to say that we'll hire the best qualified person to do this at the cheapest price," said Turner.

After extensive discussion, the policies ultimately passed as worded, with Turner casting the sole dissenting vote.

In other matters, the council:

\* Presented a proclamation to Lealice Hagwood, of Martinsville Adult and Career Education Services, and Robin Gravely, of Henry County's Center

for Community Learning, recognizing September 19-25 as Adult Education Literacy Week. Gravely said that 20 percent of the population of Martinsville and Henry County are part of the 43 million people in the United States who cannot read, write, or do basic math above a third-grade level. Hagwood said a parade will be held in honor of literacy on Sunday, September 19 at 5 p.m. at the Martinsville Speedway.

\* Heard from City Manager Leon Towarnicki on the Five Points Neighborhood project, an effort to build workforce housing in the community. Workforce housing is defined as housing that can fit someone making \$15-20 per hour.

The cost of the houses has risen from an initial estimate of \$120,000 to about \$150,000 due to the increase in material prices, but efforts are underway to help reduce the cost of the houses. Towarnicki said the city hopes to start laying foundations for the first five houses by mid-October.

\* Heard an update from Brad Kinkema, executive director of the Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA about the city's contract with the YMCA for services related to park and recreation programs.

\* Approved minutes from the August 24 council meeting

\* Approved the consent agenda.

Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles (left) presents Robin Gravely of the Center for Community Learning and Lealice Hagwood of Martinsville Adult Career Education Services with a proclamation declaring September 19-25 as Adult Education Literacy Week.



**Council member Chad Martin (left) listens as Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA Executive Director Brad Kinkema discussed the agency's partnership with the city for parks and recreation services.**

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# Club honors first responders with awards

The Fontaine Ruritan Club recently recognized local first responders with their Officer of the Year Awards



Those recognized (in no particular order) were Henry County Sheriff's Lt. Chris Ashley, Steven Ball of the Virginia State Police, James Hopkins of Martinsville Fire and EMS, Matthew Coleman of the Ridgeway District Volunteer Fire Department, Sarah Still of Henry County Public Safety, Martinsville City Police Sgt. R.D. Jones, Emily Ison of the Ridgeway Rescue Squad, the Martinsville City Sheriff's Department. The club also presented special retirement awards to City of Martinsville Sheriff Steven Draper and Fire Chief and Fire Marshal Ted Anderson of the Martinsville Fire and EMS.

## Residents issue match challenge to benefit the SPCA

Two local residents, Tracie Heavner and Jim Frith, have put forth a \$25,000 new donor match challenge to help fund the SPCA's Louise R. Lester Spay & Neuter Clinic, projected to open in this fall.

Heavner and Frith will match dollar for dollar all donations of \$100 or more from individuals and businesses who have not donated to the SPCA since Jan. 1, 2020. "Tracie and I are hoping to bring awareness to the critical need for this surgical suite at the SPCA and to broaden the base of

support in our community for an organization that works tirelessly to care for our homeless companion animal population," Frith said. Individuals and businesses interested in supporting the clinic by participating in the Heavner-Frith match should contact Rachel Barry at development.spcamhc@gmail.com or cell number (732) 742-6332.



## Turner is new Marketing Director at King's Grant

The executive director of King's Grant Retirement Community, James Souter, has announced the appointment of Jamie Turner as director of marketing. "Jamie has been a key part of our marketing team, and we were delighted to promote her to this important position," said Souter. Turner joined King's Grant in 2015 and most recently served as

the marketing counselor. Before that, she was the events coordinator. "We are confident Jamie will be successful in this role and continue to be an asset to our organization," said Souter. An experienced sales and marketing professional in senior living, Turner is a graduate of Patrick Henry Community

College. Additionally, she is a certified dementia practitioner and an active participant in the Walk to End Alzheimer's in Martinsville. Opened in 1993 as the second campus of Sunnyside Communities, King's Grant is a not-for-profit Life Plan Community located in Martinsville, Virginia.

## Warrell named new CEO of ValleyStar Credit Union

Mike Warrell was tapped to serve as the new chief executive officer (CEO) of ValleyStar Credit Union. Warrell served as president and CEO of Solano First Federal Credit Union (\$200M in assets) in Fairfield, California, which merged into Valley Strong Credit Union (\$2.5B in assets). Under his leadership,

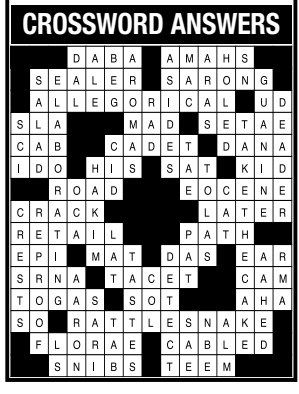
Solano First saw significant growth in deposits, assets and loans. In 2015, Mike was awarded CEO of North America by the National Association Federal Credit Unions (NAFCU). "As ValleyStar strengthens relationships and builds upon its digital integration, Mike Warrell was the clear choice to move the credit union forward. He has the experience and deep understanding needed to optimize member engagement and support the empowered workforce that makes up the ValleyStar team," said James Rorrer, chairman of the ValleyStar Board. "The future of financial institutions lays in the ability to balance digital transformation and per-

sonal relationships and the board is confident Mike Warrell's leadership will move us forward." "Understanding ValleyStar's rich history and building upon the strong relationships we currently hold are key to success," Warrell said. "Our strong foundation that began in Martinsville in 1953, allows us to meet our members where they are, helping them turn financial decisions into real-life dreams of home ownership, building a retirement nest egg or enjoying the great feeling of making that final loan payment. I take this role as CEO of ValleyStar with profound clarity that I am here to support

our ValleyStar team, members, and community, while ensuring ValleyStar leads innovation. I look forward to working alongside the successful and collaborative team in place at ValleyStar and thank the board for its trust in me to build upon the great work already taking place at ValleyStar." Previous roles Warrell has held include president of the northern region of Valley Strong Credit Union, vice president of business development, assistant vice president of member service, and president and owner of a lease savings company. Warrell holds an BFA from Plymouth State College, an MBA Certificate, Innovation Engineering from the University of Maine, and is a graduate of the Filene i3 Program.



Since 1953, the ValleyStar team has guided, educated, and stood by its members to make banking and managing your finances as easy and convenient as possible. The Credit Union is more than \$550 million in assets, serving cities and counties in Virginia and North Carolina. ValleyStar is a full-service financial institution that offers consumer and commer-



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# OBITUARIES

## Whitney Anne Lawson Hawker

Whitney Anne Lawson Hawker, 44, of Dry Fork, VA passed away on Thursday, September 8, 2021, at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. She was born on May 2, 1977, to Shannon Lee Cox Lawson and Johnny Phillip Lawson.



of Danville, VA; grandson, Bentlee Wayne Davis of Martinsville; granddaughter, Caroline Davis of Martinsville, VA and her grandmother, Margaret Davis Cox of Dry Fork, VA.

The funeral was held on September 13, 2021, at Norris Funeral Services, with Pastor Tim Hunt officiating. Burial was at Roselawn Burial Park.

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

In addition to her parents, she is survived by her fiancé, Dale Wayne Davis of Axton, VA; daughter, Madison Grace Hawker of the residence; son, Nathaniel Christopher Hawker of the residence; stepson, Matthew Wayne Davis (Jolacy) of Martinsville, VA; sister, Robin Lawson Supernault (Donald)

## Janet Marie Allan

Janet Marie Allan, 76, of Fieldale, VA passed away on Tuesday, September 14, 2021. She was born on September 17, 1944, in Massachusetts to the late James F. Mernin, Sr. and Katherine Perry Mernin. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her brother, Thomas Mernin.



Mernin; and grandchildren, Brittany Joyce, Zac Stevens, Mackenzie Coulson, Brooke Stevens, Parker Coulson-Leonard, Lexi Stevens, Riley Coulson, Sidney Coulson, Jack Coulson; great-grandchildren, Mabry Leonard and Hazel Coulson.

Memorials may be made to Saint Francis Service Dogs, 8232 Enon Dr, Roanoke, VA 24019.

Ms. Allan was a bank teller for many years and worked for her family's business after retirement.

She is survived by her daughters, Kay Stevens (James), Chris Coulson (Mike), and Janine Joyce (Ricky); her brother, James

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

## Brian Christopher Chappell

Brian Christopher Chappell, age 46, of Martinsville, Virginia, passed away Sunday, September 12, 2021. He was born August 25, 1975, to Donald Ray Chappell, Sr. and Sandra Belcher Chappell.



excel, especially baseball. However, he later received his high school diploma from a Christian School in Georgia and was very proud of his accomplishment.

Growing up, he had no fear. He was constantly jumping off of something, showing off some trick, and making sure you saw it. He grew up fishing with his dad, and

Brian is survived by his parents, his son Christopher Dylan Chappell, daughter Madelynn Michelle Chappell, nephew Johnathan Chappell, and niece Danielle Chappell. Connie Curry, his long-time partner, was loyal through thick and thin. He left behind other extended family who will miss him sorely.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, James Paul (J.P.) and Lillian Reynolds Chappell, and Russell and Goldie Pendleton Belcher, as well as his beloved brother Donald Chappell II, who also passed at age 46.

He had many lifelong friends whom he held very dear: Bob and Jan; David and Dawn; B.J.; David M.; Eric; Granny Loretta and William; Jaime; Jeb, Jerry, John, Johnnie, Richard, Roger, Scotty, Steve, and Travis. Tamie, Mindy, Diane, and April always meant the world to him. Mandy Bennett is a wonderful mother to his children.

Brian was a handful from the very start. He didn't usually care for school; he would say it just wasn't his "thing." However, he had several teachers who went out of their way to make a connection with him – a gift he always treasured. Mrs. Barbara Davis (whom he lovingly called "Miss Pickuup"), Mrs. Marilyn Emler LaPrade, Mrs. Rebecca Woody Camden, Mrs. Nancy Bowen, and Mrs. Charlotte Jones are just a few of the excellent educators who gave of themselves to a kid who felt like a fish out of water. Brian attended Hargrave Military Academy from between 7th and 8th grades (where he did make honor roll!), but he was always more interested in girls and athletics where he could

still loved to fish and crab at the beach. He loved to explore in the woods and play in creeks, searching for crawdads and treasures. He enjoyed drawing. He had a deep love for animals and couldn't stand to see any in need, which lead to the Chappell home having lots of rescue pets over the years. He had a very generous and kind heart. He loved to play and joke, and the absence of his laugh leaves us aching.

He was baptized along with his brother at Chatham Heights Baptist Church as a young man. Brian had his demons, just as we all do, but he was getting counseling and was working on bettering himself. He had an active prayer life and lifted up his friends and family often.

A memorial service will be held at McKee-Stone Funeral Home on Saturday, September 18, at 2 p.m. with Pastor Payton E. Gilbert officiating. There will be no visitation as the family is asking for privacy at this very difficult time, but they feel your love and covet your prayers. Romans 8:25 and 26 tell us that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness and prays on our behalf when we don't know what to pray for. His family clings to that hope during these sorrowful times.

Brian will forever be in our hearts and minds; always loved and always cherished.

Arrangements are by McKee-Stone Funeral Home-Martinsville, VA

To express condolences online, please visit [www.collinsmckee-stonemartinsville.com](http://www.collinsmckee-stonemartinsville.com).

## Crouch

from page 1

Virginia than Bob Crouch," Armstrong said.

Reynolds echoed those same sentiments and noted his friend Crouch was "interested very deeply in doing good things for people and trying to help people."

Susan Swecker, Virginia's Democratic Party Chair, agreed.

She said the two met in 1981 when she was a campaign worker and they never lost touch. He was the first to call when she was elected party chair.

"He loved politics," she recalled. "He loved governing, policy, and public service."

Crouch was one of those warm, inviting people that others seemed to gravitate to, Swecker remembered. He was a mentor to many young people. "I'm just truly grateful to have had him in my life."

Crouch continued to live in the service of the Commonwealth. He served for a time as Secretary of the Democratic Party of Virginia. In 1993, Crouch was appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve as the U.S. attorney for the Western District of Virginia. He also served as the Deputy Secretary of Public Safety under Gov. Mark Warner, and in 2005 became part of Gov. Tim Kaine's Cabinet as the state's homeland security advisor.

"I got involved in Virginia politics and Democratic politics in the late 80s," said U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, D-Alexandria. "Bob Crouch was already a name at that point. Bob and Clara, and Bob's parents, were great people."

Crouch "was a hardcore democrat, but he wasn't partisan," Warner recalled, and noted that Crouch would not dismiss someone's ideas or viewpoints just because their beliefs didn't align with his own. "He was someone who always would treat people hugely with respect."

Warner recalled Crouch's role during the attacks of September 11, 2001.

"Virginia had been attacked with the bombing of the Pentagon." Crouch helped try to "figure out how to protect the Commonwealth and our country, but not sacrifice peoples' rights and values. He was part of all those discussions," Warner said, and added that Crouch was "very conscious of the fact that we needed to protect Virginia, protect our country, but that didn't mean it was a license to trample on the Bill of Rights."

His death is "a loss for Virginia," Warner said. "I'm going to miss him."

Crouch is survived by his wife and teammate in politics and in life, Clara, their daughter Emily, his mother, brother, several grandchildren, and a legacy of dedication to public service.

## CLASSIFIEDS

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# Reversion from page 1



**Naomi Hodge-Muse, president of Martinsville-Henry County NAACP and president of the Martinsville-Henry County Voter's League, raised concerns about representation in local government post-reversion to the Commission on Local Government.**

remained high. County Attorney George Lyle said, "of the three words" in the title of the Voluntary Settlement Agreement between the two localities, "two of them aren't really accurate."

Debra Buchanan, vice chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors, said that while she was part of the county delegation to negotiate the agreement, she did not agree with it.

However, both conceded the agreement was the right path forward to avoid costly litigation.

Commissioners also heard concerns raised about equity and representation during and after the reversion process.

Naomi Hodge-Muse, president of Martinsville-Henry County NAACP and president of the Martinsville-Henry County Voter's League, said "we have not had a Black person on the Board of Supervisors in 30 years. The only power Black folks have in the city and this county comes in the City of Martinsville."

According to 2020 census data, the City of Martinsville has a majority Black population — 45.2 percent of residents are Black, while 43.9 percent are white. The data

also indicated that Henry County has a majority white population, at 68.8 percent, while only 21.9 percent of residents are Black.

The agreement provides for the redrawing of election districts to encompass Martinsville. However, it gives the county's Board of Supervisors "sole discretion" to redraw those districts, so long as the changes "will result in at least one member of the Henry County Board of Supervisors and at least one member of the Henry County School Board" come from a district drawn entirely within the boundaries of Martinsville.

During testimony, both localities indicated that either office could elect to add more than one Martinsville representative, or simply add more seats, to allow aspiring Martinsville residents a greater chance at winning more than one, though again that would be left to the discretion of the county's governing bodies.

The commission expects to make the report publicly available on or before October 15.

While the final report for Martinsville's reversion may substantially differ from those previously issued, the existing reports may be the best

indication publicly available as to how the commission will distill the information it received over the course of the two days of testimony in a final report to the three-judge panel.

The CLG falls under the auspices of the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Alexis Carey, public relations director for that agency, said that she was unable to provide details on the degree of specificity contained in the report and could not comment because the commission's review is ongoing.

However, the CLG's final reports on previous reversions — those of Bedford, Clifton Forge, and South Boston — are readily available online.

In the previous reversions that included some form of a Voluntary Settlement Agreement such as was approved in Martinsville and Henry County, the localities (Bedford and Clifton Forge) also agreed on an effective date of reversion. In its report, the commission did not remark on the agreed-upon dates or make recommendations contrary to the proposed dates in the agreements.

Equity issues were not directly addressed in previous reports, however one passage

in the reports of both Clifton Forge and Bedford contain language (nearly identical in both) suggesting that some consideration is given to the community.

"The reversion of the City town status would preserve (the City) as a distinct and active political entity. The ability of (the City) to retain its separate community identity is an important element in the maintenance of a sense of citizen attachment," the report stated.

Population demographics in each previous report focus primarily on issues of age, income, and a consistent trends of population decline. No mention of the racial or ethnic makeup of the communities is made.

As to the question of how public comment would be reflected in the final report on Martinsville's reversion, in each existing report, mention is made that public comment hearings were held. The number of attendees and those who chose to speak were recorded. However, the reports do not include specific testimony received during the hearings.

Among the most interesting details of the commission's report on the reversion of Clifton Forge references a

12-year annexation moratorium included in the negotiated agreement between those localities. The CLG wrote "One of the major inducements for the reversion of cities to town status is the restoration of municipal annexation authority."

The commission also noted that Clifton Forge's "opportunities to attract additional development within its current boundaries are severely restricted by the lack of vacant land for such activity." Therefore, "the Commission strongly encourages the two jurisdictions to consider reducing the moratorium on future boundary expansions by the proposed town."

Because each reversion process is tailored to the individual localities involved, the findings of the CLG in its review of Martinsville's reversion may vastly differ from previous reports on past reversions. However, a review of these reports may be helpful in trying to understand the priorities of the CLG as it examines the evidence.

To view the reports on previous reversion processes, visit [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/local-technical-assistance-and-reports-0](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/local-technical-assistance-and-reports-0) and scroll down to the section titled "Reversion from City to Town Status."

# General Fund revenue collections up 18.9 percent from the previous year

Gov. Ralph Northam on Monday announced that total General Fund revenues rose 18.9 percent in August.

"August's revenue numbers show that our roaring economic recovery is continuing," said Northam. "Thanks to fiscally responsible stewardship, Virginia ended fiscal year 2021 with an historic \$2.6 billion surplus—the largest in the Commonwealth's history, despite the pandemic. I am proud of what August's numbers say about our work to support the economic recovery by helping Virginians who need it and making strategic investments in our future."

This increase shows the strength of Virginia's economy, even in a month that traditionally is not significant for revenue collections, with collections mainly from withholding, sales taxes, and other sources that have regular monthly payments.

Collections of payroll withholding taxes increased 12.7 percent in August. Collections of sales and use taxes, reflecting July sales, grew 20.2

percent in August. Recordation taxes from real estate transactions increased by 8.9 percent. There was one more deposit day this August than there was August of last year. The first estimated payments from individuals, corporations and insurance companies are due in September.

"September collections will complete the first quarter of fiscal year 2022 and provide a clearer assessment of fiscal year 2022," said Secretary of Finance Joe Flores. "We expect growth to continue as we prepare for the next budget cycle."

On a year-to-date basis, collections of payroll withholding taxes—62 percent of General Fund revenues—were up 9.6 percent, above the annual estimate of a 1.7 percent increase. Sales tax collections—17 percent of General Fund revenues—grew 14.3 percent year-to-date, ahead of the forecast of a 4.2 percent decline. On a fiscal year-to-date basis, total revenue collections rose 5.2 percent in August, above the annual forecast of an 8.0 percent decline.

# Jail visitations halted due to pandemic

The Patrick County Jail abruptly closed to visitors on Sept. 11 due to COVID-19 concerns.

Patrick County Sheriff Dan Smith said

two of the 109 inmates on Sunday had tested positive, "but several have been exposed."

"We are taking precautions, to include segregation and quar-

antine, to mitigate the situation," Smith said, and added medical staff and jail deputies are on top of the situation, but "of course, we will be monitoring" it closely.

# New Firm from page 1

benefit the team.

Managing the Mustangs is "not about the day-to-day operations of managing 35 players," said Davis. "That's the coach's job and his staff. That's what he's paid to do. That's his job to recruit."

Rather, NPA's job is to make sure the coach has what he needs to do his job well, to make sure the facility is high-quality, and to make sure the whole effort has support and backing within the community.

"We as a group felt very strongly about making the Hooker baseball experience that is near and dear to our hearts, something better and something open to the community," Davis told the council. The group wants to "reinvest profits into the infrastructure of the field. We want to start right away with a new batting cage, a new bullpen. We want to provide quality concessions, and not just hamburgers and hot dogs."

In a recent interview, Davis said "we are true baseball people. It's important to us that the baseball community in Martinsville come together as one baseball community."

And community is at the forefront of the mission of Next Plan Athletics.

"One of the big things we say is we lay our heads here at night," Joe Haynes said, indicating that both couples live in the community and want to reinvest in the area.

"We want to make sure that the money stays local," he said. "We're not making a dime off of this team to go back into our pockets. Everything we do, we're going to put back into the team or into the field."

And they company has plans to do a lot, namely opening the field up more to the community. While details aren't yet available, birthday parties, movie screenings, and concerts are all part of the discussion.

The NPA has already formed a high school league, which is playing through October 7.

"It's basically a league for baseball players that play at the high school level that may not necessarily play fall ball. But it also gives them an opportunity to play with the older players that are playing baseball year-round," said Haynes.

There will be nights that all profits from ticket sales will go back to the high schools. "We want to make sure that Next Plan Athletics is doing something to give back to these local high schools," said Haynes. "That's all that we've talked about, is how can we run our business to where we're giving back."

Even though both the team and Hooker Field are owned by the City of Martinsville, Davis does not anticipate that the city's reversion will affect the Mustangs.

"As far as we know, nothing would change as far as the ownership," Davis said. No information has been passed along from the city as to the fate of the Mustangs upon reversion, but neither Davis nor Haynes foresee any major impact on the team.

For now, they are simply moving forward with the day-to-day basics of baseball management, from smaller discussions about new uniforms and what to sell at the concession stand to grander dreams about future movies on the field and concerts in front of a stadium full of fans.

"The baseball field is just another door to the community," said Davis, "and when you have a door to the community, it has to be a big door."

Next Plan Athletics wants to create a door that people can walk through and be awed. The group wants to create a door that people will walk through again and again as it swings for the fences.



**A sign at Hooker Field, the home of the Martinsville Mustangs. The team is now under the management of Next Plan Athletics.**

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO