

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, September 25, 2021

(USPS-6)

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Filmmaker Myron Smith's newest film, "39 Ghosts," will be screened at the Spencer-Penn Centre on Saturday, October 7.

Thrills, chills, and a whole lotta laughs: local film set for big-screen debut

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

A new locally made film, shot in Martinsville and featuring a cast of regional talent, is getting ready to make its big-screen debut. "39 Ghosts," written and directed by local filmmaker Myron Smith, is a spoof of classic haunted house films. While it includes homages to such popular ghost-hunting teams as the Scooby Doo gang and the Ghostbusters, the

movie is primarily based on the 1960 horror movie "13 Ghosts," directed by William Castle and written by Robb White.

The original "13 Ghosts" tells the story of impoverished paleontologist Cyrus Zorba and his family who are willed a mansion by Cyrus' uncle Dr. Plato Zorba. The mansion conceals Plato's hidden fortune and twelve spirits, waiting for a thirteenth

See **39 Ghosts**, page 3



Peyton Hardin (far left) presents Henry County Sherriff Lane Perry (far right) with donations he collected giving out water to the crowd at the Bassett Cruse-In. Cruse-In and parade organizers Tim Stone and Alan Alderman look on.

Bassett backs the blue with parade

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

The Bassett Cruse-In honored local law enforcement last weekend with the first ever Back the Blue Parade. Slightly more than 60 classic cars convened in the parking lot of Cross Point Church in Ridgeway where drivers heard comments of gratitude and a prayer from Henry County Sherriff Lane Perry before cruising through Martinsville, Collinsville, and into Bassett to join the waiting Cruse-In crowd. "This is awesome,"

Perry said of the parade. "The car show has become a big family. Cars come from everywhere, and here's a group of people who have decided to take this opportunity to show police officers everywhere how important they are and that there are people standing behind them."

"We have had a huge outpouring of support from the public over the last year or so," he said, and added, "but what I want to see is all of our elected leaders step up and say, 'We need to back our police officers.'"

See **Back the Blue**, page 6

"Tremendous growth" seen in number of COVID-19 vaccinations

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Both Henry County and Martinsville have seen a significant increase in vaccinations against COVID-19, health officials said.

"As of this morning, 87 percent of Virginians are vaccinated," Nancy Bell, Public Information Officer for the West Piedmont Health District, said on Wednesday. "In Henry County and Martinsville, our

numbers have gone up rather significantly."

In Henry County, 40.9 percent of the population has been vaccinated, including 48.7 percent of adults. In Martinsville, 48.4 percent of the eligible population has been vaccinated, including 62 percent of adults.

"That's showing tremendous growth," Bell said. "That translates to Martinsville having just over 6,000 fully vaccinate people and Henry County having nearly 21,000 vaccinated people. I'm

delighted to have something positive to report."

The region seems to be reaching a peak in active cases, she added.

On Wednesday, Bell reported that Henry County has 5,721 cases and 136 deaths. Martinsville had 1,868 cases. In the city, 85 people have lost their lives to COVID-19. "Those numbers are really hard to look at, really hard to share," Bell said.

See **Vaccinations**, page 2

Fire crews tackle blaze at Martinsville manufacturer

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Fire crews responded again Tuesday night, following an earlier blaze at Southern Finishing Co. in Martinsville.

Martinsville's Fire Chief/Fire Marshal Ted Anderson said emergency crews initially arrived at the manufacturing facility, located at 801 East Church Street, around 3:30 a.m. Tuesday after receiving a call from a night shift staff—either a maintenance worker or security guard—who was on site at the time of the blaze.

Flames were visible on the roof of the dust bin area of the large

hopper where the company stores sawdust when emergency crews arrived, Anderson said.

Firefighters pushed the fire back into the hopper to keep the blaze from spreading to the rest of the building, he said. Crews worked on both sides of the fire and on the roof, helping to empty the hopper of sawdust and stop the fire. The company brought in some heavy machinery to help move the sawdust.

"It's still burning inside of the hopper, but it is contained, and we were able to allow the facility to continue work today," Anderson said at the site Tuesday.

He said it is believed

See **Blaze**, page 8



Martinsville Fire Chief Ted Anderson was still at the site of the Southern Finishing fire late Tuesday morning, having arrived when the call first came in around 3:30 a.m.



Patrick & Henry Community College president Dr. Greg Hodges tells the college's board of directors that P&HCC will be making a "major announcement" on September 30.



Rhonda Hodges, P&HCC's Vice President, Workforce, Economic and Community Development, answers a question from board member Paul Geib during a tour of the college's Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology (MET) complex.

Big news on the horizon for P&HCC

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) will be making a "major, major announcement" very soon, Dr. Greg Hodges, president of P&HCC, said of a partnership between the college and the Harvest Foundation.

The statement came during the college's Sept. 20 board meeting, held at the Manufacturing, Engineering, & Technology (MET) Complex.

"It will be the largest resource announcement in the history of

our college and will not only be beneficial to our institution but to the economic development of our community," Hodges said. "I wish I could tell you all the details right now. I'm about to explode."

He added that the announcement "couples with what we've been doing with the Harvest Foundation beautifully."

Though Hodges did not disclose further details, the Harvest Foundation has previously partnered with the college to graduate a trained and skilled workforce equipped with marketable skill-sets. In 2018, the two institutions

announced a three-year, \$5.8 million grant focused on developing the local workforce with a focus on nursing, welding, and highly automated "smart factories."

The new announcement will be made on September 30 at 10 a.m. in front of West Hall on the P&HCC campus.

Hodges also thanked the board for its handling of the college's recent name change.

"We're now in the middle of our three-phase renaming process," he said. Phase 1, which

See **P&HCC**, page 7



TAD Space owner and Martinsville UP board member Wayne Draper clears sidewalks with a leaf blower during a recent community cleanup day. (See page 8 for story and additional photos.)

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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. 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 meet at 3 and 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Room of the Henry County Administration Building, Collinsville, VA.

The Martinsville City Council will meet at 7 p.m. in Martinsville City Municipal Building.

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. The event includes a cash bar, with proceeds benefitting the Historical Society, food provided by Hugo's, cornhole, and more! Free for all to attend.

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. 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 available at 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!

Saturday, Oct. 2

The local 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 with local actors. 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 or call (276) 409-0865 for more information or to buy tickets.

Thursday, Oct. 7

The Henry County School Board will meet 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 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.

Caring by Sharing will be held at Fort Trial Baptist Church (170 Oak Level Road, Stanleytown) from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free clothing, toys, and household items will be available for babies and school-age students.

Tuesday, Oct. 12

Longwood University's Small Business Development Center presents a free Zoom class, Building the Foundation for Your New Business with Lin Hite, Longwood SBDC Regional Director. Some of the most popular reasons to start a business include having a unique business idea, designing a career that

has the flexibility to grow with you, working toward financial independence, and investing in yourself. The class will be held from 9-10:30 a.m. For more information or to register, visit sbdc-longwood.com.

Tuesday, Oct. 19

Horsepasture District Community Meeting from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Horsepasture Ruritan Building. In attendance will be Horsepasture District Supervisor Debra Buchanan, County Administrator Tim Hall, Lt. Col. Steve Eanes of the Sheriff's Office, and Lisa Hughes, VDOT Resident Engineer. Social distancing will be observed.

Longwood University's Small Business Development Center presents a free Zoom class, Marketing on a Budget. Participants will learn free and low cost ways to market their business and increase sales. Topic will include: getting the most out of social media, using email marketing effectively, and free resources to make your business look great. The class will be held from 6-7 p.m. For more information or to register, visit sbdc-longwood.com.

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.

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. Complimentary wine and light refreshments. Free and open to the public. RSVP required to 276.632.3221 or PiedmontArts.org by October 19, 2021.

Wednesday, Oct. 27

Longwood University's Small Business Development Center presents a free Zoom class, CO.STARTERS Get Started with Brandon Hennessey, Longwood SBDC Director of Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. What if you could spend all your time doing what you love? Or finally stop talking about that idea you've had and start

moving toward actually doing it? The CO.STARTERS Get Started Workshop is here to help. Whether just getting started, stuck on a particular issue, or in need of a refresher, this workshop will provide the jumpstart needed to get you moving. This interactive workshop will take place from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. For more information or to register, visit sbdc-longwood.com.

ONGOING

The Fontaine Ruritan Club hosts Bingo every Tuesday at its headquarters, (1903 Joseph Martin Highway Martinsville). Doors open at 5:30 and games begin at 7 p.m. Money from Bingo supports community service awards, scholarships, and other community efforts.

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 Saturdays 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.

Vaccinations

from page 1

She said both localities currently have 19 outbreaks, which include five different COVID-19 variants.

The Virginia Department of Health is upping its testing, Bell said. The agency is hosting drive-through testing clinics Fridays from 3-7 p.m. at the National Guard Armory in Martinsville. Appointments are not needed.

“We will be doing those as long as there is a need,”

Bell said, and added that during the first testing event on September 17, there was a 27 percent positivity rate among the 51 people tested.

The state department currently recommends testing for those who are showing symptoms or signs of the virus and those who have had close contact with someone who has or who is suspected of having COVID.

Those who are fully vac-

inated should be tested 3-5 days after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, and those who are not fully vaccinated should be tested immediately after an exposure and again 5-7 days after exposure if the first test was negative. Those who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past three months and recovered do not need to get tested after exposure if there are no symptoms.

Dr. Sheranda Gunn-Nolan, Chief Medical Officer with Sovah Health, said there are approximately 40 patients receiving treatment for COVID-19 across the Martinsville and Danville facilities. Of those, 90 percent are unvaccinated.

“A vaccine decreases your risk of death,” said Gunn-Nolan. “Decrease your risk of death from COVID-19 and get vaccinated. That's a

statement on behalf of every healthcare hero that is fighting and risking their lives to serve this community. I am hopeful in hearing that the vaccine numbers have continued to climb, but we are not there yet.”

To find a local vaccination site, visit vaccine.gov. To learn more about the status of COVID-19 in the state and in your community, visit vdh.virginia.gov.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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CLUES ACROSS
1. One of the four Vedas
5. Part of (abbr.)
8. At the peak
12. African antelope
14. Expression of satisfaction
15. Yankees' ace
16. Belittled
18. A baglike structure
19. Utah Jazz coach Snyder
20. Actress Tomei
21. Explosive
22. Formal for “on”
23. Cruelties
26. Country singer Brad
30. Make very happy
31. Binary compound of hydrogen with a metal
32. Albanian currency
33. Subatomic particle
34. Type of salt
39. 007's creator

42. Emerging
44. Railroad flare
46. Observed
47. Capable of reproduction
49. Indicates adjacent to
50. Legendary Notre Dame coach
51. Not wide
56. An embarrassing mistake
57. Pearl Jam's debut album
58. Denotes passerine birds
59. Stumble
60. Midway between east and southeast
61. W. Indian trees
62. You
63. Pigpen
64. Be aware of

CLUES DOWN
1. Crease
2. “Honey” actress Jessica
3. Broad volcanic crater
4. Product safety watchdog
5. Southern Colombian city
6. Part of a church
7. Perceptible by touch
8. Pronounce not guilty of criminal charges
9. Hairpiece
10. Variety acts
11. “Mystic River” actor Sean
13. Remove salt
17. Went out with
24. Type of bread
25. Popular Eagles song
26. Philosophy degree
27. Yes vote
28. Passports and licenses are two
29. No seats available

35. Pounds per square inch
36. A way to launch an attack on
37. The lowest cardinal number
38. Popular Miller beer
40. Pokes holes in
41. Closest to
42. Folk singer DiFranco
43. Rivne's former name
44. Flat ruler
45. Lacking the means to do something
47. Cockatoo
48. Dred Scott decision deliverer
49. Explosion exclamation
52. Canadian flyers
53. Houston university
54. At some prior time
55. Red, swollen mark

Northam announced administration appointments

Gov. Ralph Northam announced additional appointments to his administration.

Lisa L. Carter, of Richmond, director of Innovation and Sustainability Technology; and Arthur V. Evans, D.Sc., of Ashland, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Biology, Randolph-Macon College, University of Richmond,

Research Collaborator, Department of Entomology, Smithsonian Institution were reappointed to the Board of Trustees of the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

Richard Hall, of Martinsville, managing director of Orion Capital, was reappointed to the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority.

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Disaster levels at hospitals prompt new evaluation guidelines

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

The City of Martinsville announced last week that, due to issues with staffing and an increase in the number of critical patients, “hospitals are operating at disaster levels.”

With limited bed capacity available, “patients not meeting the criteria for ambulance transport to an emergency room” are advised to see either their primary care physician or go to an urgent care facility.

Martinsville EMS is making changes to prioritize patients with emergent medical conditions to ensure they receive the care and resources they need.

Virginia Department of Health Public Information Officer Nancy Bell said this is not an issue unique to Martinsville—hospitals across the state and nationwide are dealing with the same problems, due

in part to an increase in patients being treated for COVID-19.

In Franklin County, Bell said, “we have a tent set up in the ER parking lot. All the beds are full. All the ICU units are full, and people are pouring in, so it’s the same message” as in Martinsville—“don’t come unless you have a medical emergency. It’s that perfect storm of the Delta variant being more severe and not having enough people vaccinated to have herd immunity.”

“The emergency department is not the place for that,” Anderson said. “We get a lot of 911 calls that aren’t necessarily true emergencies.”

Rather than using emergency resources for non-emergency needs, Anderson said the public should take advantage of their primary care doctor, urgent cares, and even tele-doc services.

With the new changes in place, emergency crews will assess the

condition of patients who call 911. If the issue is not life-threatening and the patient has access to an alternative healthcare provider, “we try to encourage them to do that,” he said.

Dr. Sheranda Gunn-Nolan, Chief Medical Officer with Sovah Health, said that hospital capacity “is incredibly fluid and changes rapidly. To manage the increase in COVID-19 patients requiring hospitalization, our hospital leaders are evaluating capacity within every department hour-to-hour, closely tracking fluctuations in emergency, acute and critical care areas and regularly reporting our capacity in these areas to the state and to our regional partners. Currently, Sovah Health is doing everything we can to meet this latest surge with all of our available resources.”

Martinsville Fire Chief and Fire Marshal Ted Anderson agreed. He added that some who call 911

want to go to the emergency room for COVID-19 testing.

“If we’re not under diversion, it’s pretty much going to be business as usual,” Anderson said, but added that he can envision a future where the same or similar evaluation practices are put in place even when hospitals are not diverting patients. His deputy chief has been working for several years on assessments in the field to help eliminate non-emergent transports.

“Obviously if that’s not feasible, if it’s remotely close to needing emergency room care, then that’s what we’re going to do,” Anderson said, and added that most have been understanding and receptive to the new evaluation guidelines.

A lack of sufficient staffing, both in hospitals and in emergency services departments, contributed to the need for these new guidelines, Anderson said, and noted

that when he initially began his career, he competed against more than 100 applicants for the job.

Now, “we’re lucky to have 10 people apply. It’s getting harder and harder to find the expertise and the drive needed for this type of career,” he said.

In hospitals too, “medical staff are quitting,” Bell said. “The hours have been tremendous. It’s a lot to ask a person to take care of people all day and then go home and potentially expose your family to something and get yourself run down working a lot of overtime.”

Medical staff are getting burned out, she said. However, those who remain continue to work to provide the best medical care possible to as many people as possible.

“I know the hospitals well, and the people who work there,” Bell said, “and I know they are doubling and tripling their effort, to try to get people through.”

Utility company requests fuel rate increase for customers in Virginia

Appalachian Power, a utility subsidiary of American Electric Power filed its annual fuel factor update last week with the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) and is requesting an increase in the fuel rate for its Virginia customers.

Fuel costs are the portion of a customer’s bill used to recover the cost of natural gas and coal used in the generation of electricity, as well as the cost of purchased power. The SCC reviews

the company’s fuel rate each year to determine whether it should be increased or lowered.

Fuel costs are approximately 20 percent of a residential customer’s electric bill. The current fuel factor is 1.999 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh). Appalachian’s proposal increases the fuel factor to 2.300 cents per kWh. For a customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours in a month, this will result in an approximate \$3 monthly increase. The fuel factor was

reduced last year due to lower costs; this year’s increase brings it to the same level as it was in 2019.

If approved, the increase will go into effect in November. At that point, a Virginia residential customer using 1,000 kWh/month will pay 12.29 cents/kWh for electricity, a cost that remains below the national average. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), the aver-

age residential U.S. cost for electricity was 13.41 cents per kWh. (Electric Power Monthly, August 24, 2021.)

Appalachian Power has 1 million customers in Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee (as AEP Appalachian Power). It is part of American Electric Power, which is focused on building a smarter energy infrastructure and delivering new technologies and custom energy solutions. AEP’s approxi-

mately 16,800 employees operate and maintain the nation’s largest electricity transmission system and more than 223,000 miles of distribution lines to efficiently deliver safe, reliable power to nearly 5.5 million customers in 11 states. AEP is also one of the nation’s largest electricity producers with approximately 30,000 megawatts of diverse generating capacity, including 5,500 megawatts of renewable energy.

39 Ghosts

from page 1

ghost. The cast includes Margaret Hamilton, most famous for her role as the Wicked Witch of the West in 1939’s “Wizard of Oz,” as housekeeper and medium Elaine. “13 Ghosts” was remade in 2001 starring Tony Shaloub.

“39 Ghosts” is a new effort by a practiced filmmaker, artist, writer, and actor.

“I’ve always been interested in storytelling,” Smith said. He has a history of stage acting going back to high school. “All four years I did every dramatic production possible.”

During his senior year, he wrote a script for a dinner theater his class organized. It was outvoted by a slim two-vote margin. Though he initially had dreams of becoming a comic artist, he shifted his focus to film, in part because “filmmaking is a way to combine all of my passions, from performing to storytelling to the visual aspects of it.”

Smith also realized he could capture the attention of an audience longer.

“I noticed that when people look at your books or when they look at art, sometimes they only spend two or three seconds at the most looking at each image, regardless of how many hours you put into that image. And often with a book you never see a person’s reaction, and often you don’t even know if they’ve read it,” he said. Film, by its very nature, holds the viewers’ attention, giving them more time to engage with the work.

Smith made his big shift to film in 2012 when he wrote and directed the feature horror film “Young Blood: Evil Intentions” with his brother Mat. It was their first attempt at making a full-length movie with a narrative plot.

“That experience led me to concentrate more of my time on film,” he said. The movie sold out its first night of a three-night premier at the Rives Theatre in Martinsville.

His other credits include another horror comedy, “Invasion of the Killer Cicadas,” and a number of short “sweded” films including “Alice in Wonderland,” “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory,” “Wizard of Oz,” and “Little Shop of Horrors.”

Smith explained that the term “sweded” comes from

the film “Be Kind Rewind” and refers to homemade, very (very) low-budget remakes of popular movies, usually filmed over a very short period of times and typically lasting 5 to 7 minutes. He created the Virginia Sweded Film Fest in 2016, which lasted until 2018.

This latest project is Smith’s first full-length movie since “Young Blood,” and was two and a half years in the making. Filming took place in Martinsville in early 2019 but, as with so many other things, screening the finished product had to be put on hold because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Smith said he took on the project because “I didn’t want to pigeonhole myself as the guy who made sweded films.” He wrote the script in a few months, drawn to the idea, in part, because he knew it would be a challenge to have so many costumed characters.

“I’m always trying to find new ways to challenge myself,” Smith said. “I don’t want to always be known for doing the same genre or doing the same thing.”

The process was a series of firsts for Smith. It was the first time where the shoots were spaced out, both giving the actors a break and giving Smith time to prepare for the next weekend of filming. It was his first time having a consistent set to return to—it was filmed primarily in a house on Cleveland Avenue with no running water or electricity. It also is Smith’s first solo feature-length film.

In terms of casting, Smith relied entirely on local talents. He held auditions for two days at Studio 107 in Martinsville, where he rents space.

“I like being able to provide an outlet for some of these people to showcase their talents. There’s a lot of talent in this area that kind of goes unrecognized,” he said.

About half of the cast is from Henry County, while the rest come from the surrounding area. Mal and Melanie Rorrer play the lead roles. Robbie Hendrix was cast in the role of the lawyer. For the Ghostbustaz, Smith reached out to a group called the Ghostbusters of North Carolina. The film’s score was done by Winston-Salem musician Wes Frank Norman.



PHOTO BY RICK DAWSON

Debbie Spencer as the Wailing Wench in Myron Smith’s original film, “39 Ghosts.”

Smith said that the majority of the makeup in the film was done by Stephanie Davis, who recently committed suicide.

“She was on set for every day of filming,” Smith recalled. “One thing that helps me continue is I feel like things like (this movie) are important to give people something to look forward to and give people a sense of purpose.”

He likes to think of his film sets as places that are diverse and accepting of all people, no matter their backgrounds. “My hope is to do something positive,

to create a positive environment ... there’s a need for that. There’s a demand for more art, for more creativity.”

Now that the film is wrapped up and ready to hit the big screen, Smith is turning his focus to his senior thesis project. He is currently enrolled in Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School for the Arts’ Photography and Film program, where he is concentrating in film. He’s dreamed of going to VCU since middle school.

“It seemed like the next step toward legitimacy,”



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Stephanie Davis applies makeup to actor Brad Barbour, who plays Gambling Gary in the film, for a scene.

Smith said. “I realized I’m going to have to step up my game in order to survive.” He hopes the program will open more opportunities for him as a filmmaker. “I want to take my film career as far as it can go.”

Asked if he’s got a next big project in mind, Smith replied, “At this point the future’s uncertain.” He said he’ll be spending most of next year promoting “39 Ghosts,” and trying to find a distributor for the film. However, “something’s on the horizon.” We’ll just have to wait and see what that something might be.

One this is certain—whatever it may, it will be coming to a theater near you soon.

“39 Ghosts” will be screened at the Spencer-Penn Centre on Saturday, October 2. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the film begins at 7. Tickets are \$13 in advance and \$15 at the door and can be purchased at 39Ghosts.TicketLeap.com or by calling (276) 409-0865. Though the film is not rated by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), Smith said it would likely earn either a PG-13 or R rating.



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OPINION

Announcing Effigy University

Ladies and gentlemen, our nation is under attack. Across the country, statues celebrating our proud history are being defaced and torn down. Monuments to great Americans like Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and Nathan Bedford Forrest are being turned to scrap. Sure, some of these figures are controversial, but this is HISTORY! Without these statues, how will we remember our past?

Hi folks, I'm Ben R. Williams, beloved columnist and President of Effigy University, a brand new institution of higher learning that will revolutionize education. Here at Effigy University, we've consulted with the nation's leading historians and scientists to develop the world's first statue-based history curriculum.

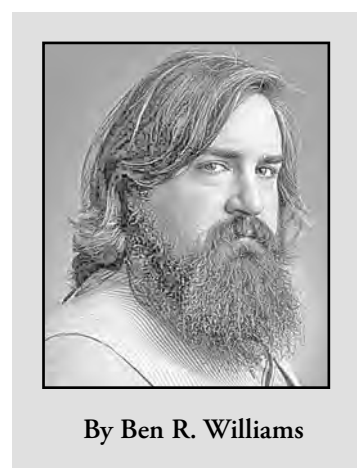
Did you know that every single historian has seen a statue at some point? It's true! We here at Effigy University real-

ize that looking at statues is not only the best way to learn about the past; it's the ONLY way!

Want to learn about World War II? You're in luck; we have a statue of the six Marines raising a U.S. flag at Iwo Jima. Want to know all about former President Lyndon Baines Johnson? Just one glance at our LBJ statue and you can tell Robert Caro to take a hike! And of course, our Confederacy statue, which depicts either J.E.B. Stuart or a random soldier depending upon whom you ask, offers a complete course on the history of the Civil War in just seconds!

But Effigy University isn't only about history. We offer programs in many different disciplines. Any potential math majors out there want to learn about the Pythagorean Theorem? Good news: we've got a statue of Pythagoras! Don't feel like taking multiple semes-

ters of boring physics classics? Check out our statue of Sir Isaac Newton! Interested in becom-



ing an educator yourself? Don't worry; our statue celebrating the history of statues will teach you everything you need to know!

Of course, many people today are realizing the value and importance of learning a trade. Our comprehensive HVAC course offers a statue of a 3 1/2 ton heat pump, while our electri-

cal engineering course features a statue of a giant light bulb that really lights up at night! This statue is also required coursework for our moth biology program.

I think we can all agree that the traditional college experience just takes way too long. Four years for a bachelor's degree? Ridiculous! Here at Effigy University, you can complete any one of our programs in mere minutes, and you can complete EVERY program in under an hour!

You see, unlike traditional college campuses, we don't have a bunch of fancy "lecture halls" and "dormitories" and "bathrooms." Effigy University instead offers a unique drive-thru experience. Simply arrive at our campus, conveniently located in the parking lot of the former Hills department store at the corner of Munson and Cumberland, declare your major, and one of our "professors" will direct you to the proper lane, at which point you can drive past

any number of deeply informative statues at your own pace.

But how much does it cost, you ask? Unlike traditional colleges, Effigy University won't charge you an arm and leg; how does \$20 per degree sound? If you're feeling ambitious, try the Poindexter Special: three degrees for just fifty bucks! You can't beat that with a stick!

Lately, many people have been asking if Effigy University is an accredited institution. That's an excellent question! My attorney has advised me not to answer it at this time, but it's excellent.

So come on down to Effigy University, located in the former Hills parking lot at Munson and Cumberland. We've already had hundreds of students graduate and you might bump into one at any time. So just remember: the next time someone tells you that we'll never remember our past if we knock down our statues, look them square in the eye and say, "Hey! Eff. U!"

The Services My Office Provides

Morgan Griffith
9th District U.S. Rep.

One of the important roles of any member of Congress is to serve as a liaison for his or her constituents to the federal government. Acting as that liaison or ombudsman rarely gets headlines or letters to the editor, but it is one of the most important things that I do. Accordingly, I want to share some of the services my office provides and the ways my team and I can assist you.

Constituent services are typically handled by members of my local staff at our district offices or during my staff traveling office hours, which are held in every area monthly. If you have questions or face any complications, our office can often intercede on a constituent's behalf to answer questions, find solutions,

or cut through red tape with federal agencies such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Labor, Medicare, the Internal Revenue Service, and more.

We also can help constituents who are requesting or renewing passports, asking for the expedited processing of these documents, or dealing with issues involving travel visas. This has been more problematic as a result of COVID, so please don't hesitate to call early.

While we can offer much assistance, I would note that we are generally prohibited from becoming involved in legal matters or overriding decisions made by a federal agency.

An inquiry related to a federal matter can be opened on your behalf

by contacting my office either by phone or website or attending traveling staff office hours. They are held at least once each month in every area that doesn't have a bricks and mortar office. Currently, our bricks and mortar offices are located in Abingdon and Christiansburg. During traveling staff office hours, you are also invited to share opinions regarding legislative matters. The monthly schedule of our visits to your area is posted on my website at the beginning of each month.

Regardless of which federal agency you may need help with, we will need your written authorization in order to comply with the provisions of the Privacy Act. Our privacy consent form can be found on my website or you may contact us by phone or mail to obtain the form. When returning

this form to my team, you will want to include any pertinent information and claim numbers that might be needed. The form also asks that you summarize your issue with the federal agency to help ensure we understand exactly what assistance you are seeking.

Additionally, my staff can help navigate the process of applying for grants from the Federal Government or seeking a nomination to the U.S. Service Academies.

In Washington, we can usually set up tours of several national landmarks such as the Supreme Court, Bureau of Printing & Engraving, Library of Congress, and our most requested tours – the U.S. Capitol and the White House. However, due to COVID, some of the tours have been suspended. Many of these tours can be booked

up months in advance, so contact my office as early as possible if you are planning a trip to the nation's capital. Our team can also give you a list of other popular attractions and museums you may want to add to your trip itinerary. So, please do not hesitate to contact my D.C. office with any questions or inquiries regarding your trip to the capital. My staff is here and happy to assist you.

Constituents can reach out to our office to purchase American flags—including ones flown over the Capitol. Also, a United States flag for burial purposes may be obtained from my office for a veteran's casket at no charge if you have a completed VA27-2008 form.

My office works hard to provide resources for the youth in the Ninth District. We offer internships in both my

Washington, D.C. office and my district offices. Internships run throughout the fall, spring, or summer semesters for college students and provide invaluable work and hands-on experience. Further information about the internships can be found on my website. There is also an education kids page on my website to provide resources to the students that have an interest in learning more about American government.

It is my honor and privilege to serve you and assist in your interactions with the federal government. If I can help you, please contact us.

For questions, concerns, or comments, call my Abingdon office at 276-525-1405, my Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671, or via email at www.morgan-griffith.house.gov.

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

Hodges selected for Aspen Institute's program

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program announced that Dr. Greg Hodges, president of Patrick & Henry Community College, is one of 25 leaders selected for the 2021-22 class of the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship. This program supports community college presidents in the early years of their tenure as they aim to achieve higher and more equitable levels of student success. The Fellowship's philanthropic partner is JPMorgan Chase.

The 25 Aspen Fellows, who lead colleges that collectively serve more than 280,000 students, were selected through a highly competitive process. Starting later this year, the Fellows will engage over nine months in residential sessions and virtual learning to develop strategies to meet their goals for student success and equity with data to assess challenges and progress.

"We continue to learn how the best community colleges improve outcomes for students and close persistent race- and income-based equity gaps," said Josh Wyner, executive director of the College Excellence Program. "This year's fellows have demonstrated their commitment to achieving excellent and equitable student outcomes, and we are eager to work with them as they join Aspen's network of more than 100 fellows who serve as community college presidents."

When Hodges received the news, he said, "I am deeply honored to be included among such an incredible and highly talented group of college presidents! The Aspen Institute has a well-earned national reputation for helping community college leaders become transformative change agents in order to increase the economic mobility of the students we serve. Participation in this second cohort of the New President Fellowship will provide an opportunity to learn and grow with my fellow CEOs all in an effort to enhance the educational attainment rates of P&HCC's service region."

As community colleges grapple with the impact of COVID and enrollment declines, turnover among presidents remains high. Aspen is committed to helping prepare the next generation of exceptionally capable and highly diverse leaders through its fellowship programs for new and rising presidents. This new class of Aspen Presidential Fellows is 48 percent female, and 64 percent are people



Dr. Greg Hodges, president of Patrick & Henry Community College, is one of 25 leaders selected for the 2021-22 class of the Aspen New Presidents Fellowship.

of color. Located in 18 states, their institutions too are diverse, from a tribal college with fewer than 500 students to an urban college that educates more than 35,000 each year.

"Community colleges play a critical role in helping to prepare young adults and incumbent workers for in-demand jobs of the future," said Monique Baptiste, Vice President and Head of Jobs & Skills for Global Philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase.

"Ensuring that the leaders of these institutions are equipped with the support and training they need to develop equitable student success is an integral part of building capacity over the long-run. JPMorgan Chase is proud to partner with the Aspen Institute to build the next generation of exceptional college leaders as they work to advance the prosperity of the diverse communities and students they serve."

See more on www.henrycountyenterprise.com

One in custody after alleged call to elementary school

Staff members at Campbell Court Elementary School reported receiving a call from the spouse of an employee on September 21, around 12:38 p.m.

The school staff were concerned about the call, according to a release from the Henry County Sheriff's Office. As a safety precaution, students and teachers acted according to their safety plan and enacted a lockdown. Authorities and school

officials worked together to ensure students and staff were safe.

Through the course of the investigation, authorities alleged that Brock Addison Stanley, 34, of 89 Meadowgreen Drive, Bassett, had called into the school.

He was subsequently charged with three misdemeanor counts of violation of a protective order and is currently held in the Henry

County Jail without bond.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at (276) 638-8751 or the Crimestoppers Program at 63-CRIME (632-7463). The Crimestoppers Program offers rewards up to \$2,500 for information related to crimes. The nature of the crime and the substance of the information determine the amount of reward paid.



Brock Addison Stanley

Student charged after incident at high school

Faculty members at Bassett High School notified the School Resource Officer on Monday, Sept. 20, that a student had made verbal threats to harm a small group of

classmates. The threat allegedly involved the use of a firearm. The Henry County Sheriff's Office and school officials worked together to ensure students and staff

were safe.

The 14-year-old male that allegedly made the threats was charged with making threats of death or bodily injury to persons on school property and

subsequently detained at W.W. Moore Juvenile Detention Facility located in Danville.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact the

Henry County Sheriff's Office at (276) 638-8751 or the Crimestoppers Program at 63-CRIME (632-7463). The Crimestoppers Program offers rewards up to

\$2,500 for information related to crimes. The nature of the crime and the substance of the information determine the amount of reward paid.

Cases decrease in Patrick schools, increase in other areas

Taylor Boyd
Staff writer

COVID-19 cases are continuing to decrease in the Patrick County Public Schools system, according to Patrick County Public Schools COVID-19 dashboard.

Schools Superintendent Dean Gilbert said he thinks the number of quarantines the school system is encountering is due to family members potentially having the virus or encountering someone suspected of being positive for COVID-19.

"We still have some positive cases, but I think our mitigation strategies and what we're doing at schools are working. It seems like so far things are headed in the right direction this last week or two," he said.

Gilbert said he is hopeful that cases will continue to trend downwards, but since there is still the possibility of encountering more cases or variants, he can't be sure.

"We were a little concerned this week because it's been a week and a half since Labor Day weekend, and those holidays do tend to see an uptick in cases, but so far it's actually continued to trend down," he said.

Patrick County

As of Wednesday, Sept. 15 the Patrick County Public Schools dashboard suggested there were 35 positive cases and 113 quarantines in the school system, a decline of 17 cases and 73 quarantines from the previous week's report.

This marks the second week a row the dashboard has shown a decline in quarantines and cases for the school division.

The dashboard suggested there were 23 cases and 42 quarantines at Patrick County High School, a decline of 11 cases and 36 students and staff in quarantine from the previous week's report.

The dashboard also suggests that all of the elementary schools, except for Woolwine Elementary School, have a minimum of five in quarantine and two positive cases, except for Meadows of Dan Elementary School, which has no positive cases for the second week in a row.

The data shows that all of the schools had a decrease in quarantines, except for Blue Ridge Elementary School, which had an increase of nine quarantines. Quarantines at Hardin Reynolds Memorial School are reported to have decreased

from 24 to seven, Meadows of Dan decreased by eight quarantines, Stuart Elementary School decreased to 19 people in quarantine, and Patrick Springs Primary School had its quarantine count drop by nine in quarantine.

There were no reported cases or quarantines in Woolwine Elementary School, the Central Office, Transportation Office, Maintenance Department, or the Technology Department, according to the dashboard.

The Patrick County Public School COVID-19 Dashboard is updated by the close of business each Wednesday. It can be viewed at www.patrick.k12.va.us/families/covid-19_dashboard.

Henry County

In Henry County Public Schools, data suggested that as of September 17, there were 36 positive cases and 161 quarantines. This is an increase of nine cases and seven quarantines from the previous week.

The data suggests Magna Vista High School has nine positive cases and 42 students and staff in quarantine, the highest in the division. Bassett High School is reported to have eight cases and 24 quarantines, and Laurel Park Middle School has six cases and 25 quarantines.

The data suggests all of the elementary schools have a minimum of one person in quarantine and one positive case, except for Sanville Elementary School, which has no reported positive cases.

There were no reported cases or quarantines in the Axton Annex, Career Academy, and Outside Programs.

The Henry County Public School division dashboard is updated every Friday by the end of the business day. It can be viewed at www.henry.k12.va.us/Page/22823.

City of Martinsville

Martinsville City Public Schools is reported to have 10 confirmed cases amongst its students, and one confirmed case amongst its employees. This is an increase of six cases for the school division.

Five of the positive cases are in Martinsville High School, three are at Albert Harris Elementary School, and two are at Patrick Henry Elementary School.

The dashboard can be viewed at www.martinsville.k12.va.us/division-updates/covid-19/covid-19-data-dashboard.

| Building | Positive Cases | Quarantines |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Blue Ridge | 2 | 27 |
| Hardin Reynolds | 3 | 7 |
| Meadows of Dan | 0 | 5 |
| Patrick County High | 23 | 42 |
| Patrick Springs | 2 | 13 |
| Stuart | 5 | 19 |
| Woolwine | 0 | 0 |
| Central Office | 0 | 0 |
| Transportation | 0 | 0 |
| Maintenance | 0 | 0 |
| Technology | 0 | 0 |

The Patrick County Public School COVID-19 Dashboard is updated by the close of business each Wednesday. It can be viewed at www.patrick.k12.va.us/families/covid-19_dashboard.

| BUILDING | CASES 9/10-9/17 | QUARANTINES 9/10-9/17 | TOTAL CASES SINCE 11/6/20 | TOTAL QUARANTINES SINCE 11/6/20 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Axton Elementary | 1 | 11 | 11 | 66 |
| Axton Annex | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bassett High | 8 | 24 | 50 | 431 |
| Campbell Court Elementary | 1 | 1 | 8 | 126 |
| Career Academy | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Center for Community Learning | 0 | 0 | 3 | 13 |
| Central Office | 1 | 1 | 4 | 19 |
| Drewry Mason Elementary | 1 | 6 | 23 | 106 |
| Facilities Maintenance | 0 | 0 | 2 | 12 |
| FC Middle | 1 | 19 | 36 | 366 |
| GW Carver Elementary | 3 | 5 | 18 | 106 |
| Laurel Park Middle | 6 | 25 | 46 | 325 |
| Magna Vista High | 9 | 42 | 68 | 531 |
| Meadow View Elementary | 3 | 14 | 40 | 296 |
| Mt. Olivet Elementary | 1 | 5 | 13 | 79 |
| Outside Programs (HMS, TDP) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Pupil Transportation | 0 | 0 | 18 | 45 |
| Rich Acres Elementary | 0 | 1 | 5 | 32 |
| Sanville Elementary | 0 | 6 | 9 | 73 |
| Stanleytown Elementary | 1 | 1 | 10 | 65 |

The Henry County Public School division dashboard is updated every Friday by the end of the business day. It can be viewed at www.henry.k12.va.us/Page/22823.

| COVID-19 Data Dashboard | | | |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Confirmed Active Cases for 9/10/21 - 9/16/21 | | | |
| Schools | Students Confirmed | Employees Confirmed | Outbreaks Confirmed |
| Clearview | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Albert Harris | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Patrick Henry | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Martinsville Middle | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Martinsville High | 5 | 0 | 0 |

The Martinsville City Public Schools COVID-19 dashboard is updated every Friday morning. It can be viewed at www.martinsville.k12.va.us/division-updates/covid-19/covid-19-data-dashboard.

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Back the Blue

from page 1



Cars participating in the first Back the Blue Parade arrive at the Bassett Cruise-In in downtown Bassett.



Groups of supporters lined the Back the Blue parade route, which stretched from Ridgeway to Bassett.



Henry County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jim Adams (far right) presents a proclamation expressing gratitude for local law enforcement to (from left to right) Henry County Sherriff Lane Perry, Martinsville City Sherriff Steve Draper, and Martinsville City Police Officer Coretha Gravely.



A classic Chevrolet, decorated with a flag supporting law enforcement, waits at the Back the Blue parade starting point in Ridgeway. The parade route wound through Ridgeway, Martinsville, Collinsville, and into downtown Bassett.



The first ever Back the Blue parade attracted around 60 cars, each paying a \$10 registration fee, which was donated to the benevolence funds of all three Martinsville and Henry County law enforcement departments.

Tony Wright and Doug Lawrence were among the classic car owners who joined in the parade. Wright said law enforcement backs him up all the time, he wanted to back them up too.

“I run a funeral home, and they provide escorts for us all the time, so this was the very least I could do.”

“It’s crazy times, we’ve got to keep supporting the guys,” said Lawrence.

Alan Alderman, chairman of the Bassett Cruise-In Committee, said that since “police get sort of

a raw deal, we thought it would be great to sort of pat them on the back and show them that we care about them.”

He hopes the parade will become an annual event.

“We get \$10 a car,” Alderman said. That money will be split between the benevolence funds of Henry County and Martinsville City law enforcement.

Perry said the funds are used to support law enforcement officers.

“If one of our officers is in the hospital, it will send some little gift, like a little basket of some type. If an officer’s immediate family member dies, it’ll send some flowers to the funeral home,” Perry said. The funds are also usually put toward a Christmas dinner for the officers.

made signs carrying messages of support. Once the parade reached downtown Bassett and joined the other 400+ cars at the Cruise-In, Jim Adams, chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors, read a proclamation expressing gratitude for the men and women of local law enforcement.

“We appreciate the extraordinary efforts and sacrifices made by those officers and their family members on a daily basis in order to protect our schools, workplaces, roadways, homes, and visitors,” Adams said as he read the proclamation, in part.

“As a police department, we like working with the community,” Martinsville City Police Officer Coretha Gravely said to the crowd, “and my motto is policing others in the way I want to be policed. Remember that police officers - we’re human too. We’re human too. Our job is to protect and to serve and do the best we can.”



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OBITUARY

Christine Wimbish Pratt

Christine Wimbish Pratt, 87, of Collinsville, VA passed away on Sunday, September 19, 2021. She was born on January 25, 1934, in Stella, Virginia to the late Eva Rea Scott. In addition to her mother, she is preceded in death by her husband, John E. Pratt.

Mrs. Pratt was formerly employed at E.I. DuPont and was a Mary Kay consultant for many years. She was involved in the Henry County Home Demonstration Club, a member of the Collinsville Lioness Club and a member Old Well Christian Church, where she was in the CWF.

Mrs. Pratt is survived by her sons, John R. Pratt (Karen) of Martinsville, VA and Victor P. Pratt of Bassett, VA; her daughter, Denise P. Warren (Chip)



of Christiansburg, VA; sister, Jeanne Rakes, and niece, Dawn Sellers, both of Chesapeake, VA. She is also survived by her grandchildren, Caroline Warren, Daniel Warren (Chelsey), John M. Pratt, and Austin Pratt; great-grandchildren, Griffin Warren and Andrew Cozart.

A special thanks to her caregivers, Cat, Patricia, Susie and Ralph.

All services will be held privately by the family.

Donations may be made to Old Well Christian Church Cemetery Fund, c/o 150 Grand Lake Dr., Ridgeway, VA 24148, or a charity of the donor's choice.

Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, VA is serving the Pratt family. Online condolences may be made at www.norrisfuneral.com

P&HCC

from page 1

concluded at the end of August, was a change of all public-facing information including changes on the website, logo, and social media.

The college is in the midst of phase 2, which will go through June 30, 2022, and includes changes to physical structures, like buildings, sports iconography, and street signs. At the same time, the college is already at work on phase 3, which takes the college through the end of December 2022, the time frame given by the state board. The final phase includes getting the name officially changed in national, federal, and statewide supporting agencies.

The board also heard from Terry Young, vice president of Academic and Student Services, who reported a decline in student enrollment numbers, a significant amount attributed to a lack of dual enrollment from high school students taking college classes.

Dual enrollment for the fall 2021 semester was down 14.95 percent from fall of 2020, while total enrollment was down 6.75 percent from 1,484 to 1,384. Young noted that the decline was lower than the average for community colleges statewide. Hodges noted that many other rural areas were facing similar challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brian Henderson, P&HCC's Athletic Director, reported on the college's growing athletics program. He said there are 205 student athletes at P&HCC for the current semester, up from 130 a year ago. Of the total, 201 came to P&HCC strictly because of the sports it offers. He expects the number will be closer to 250 next year, "because we still haven't maximized all of our rosters."

Those student athletes, he said, and P&HCC's ability to attract more of them, will benefit the local economy as students rent apartments, eat at local restaurants, and otherwise spend money in the area during their time at the school.

Hodges said he soon will be traveling to Richmond to address the

General Assembly on the "significant positive impact" athletics has had on campus. "Athletics is now receiving statewide attention and even national attention, and certainly the success of our academic programming the last several years has assisted with that and made that very much a viable portion of our enrollment."

Rhonda Hodges, vice president of Workforce, Economic and Community Development, said that P&HCC has awarded funding to 98 Fast Forward students this semester, which is a tie with the significantly larger Northern Virginia Community College. P&HCC also has been leading the state in G3 (Get Skilled, Get a Job, Get Ahead) grant funding awards, and currently, 94 percent of P&HCC's Fast Forward students are participating at no cost to them or their parents.

In other matters, the board:

- * Approved minutes from previous board meetings.

- * Heard the Institutional Advancement report. The decision was made to once again postpone the popular scholarship luncheon, which usually includes around 200 donors and scholarship recipients, due to safety concerns. P&HCC recently released a mini-grant application process, funded through the foundation, which is available for faculty and staff to come up with creative and innovative ways to teach new things in the classroom that otherwise may not be budgeted.

- * Heard a facilities update, including an announcement that demolition is complete on the second MET complex, and construction has begun. Plumbing has been installed, and the complex is on track to begin classes next fall. The complex will triple P&HCC's welding capacity, which is expected to boost enrollment.

- * Toured the current MET complex with Hodges to learn about the various ways P&HCC is helping prepare students to enter the modern workforce.

Museum to require COVID-19 vaccine or recent negative test for Dragon Festival

The Virginia Museum of Natural History's (VMNH) Dragon Festival normally draws crowds of people. To ensure full safety for all guests, vendors, performers, and staff, the Virginia Museum of Natural History will institute strict policies for participation considering the COVID-19 pandemic and the circulation of highly transmissible variants.

For 2021's Dragon Festival, which will be held October 15 and 16, VMNH will require proof of a full course of COVID-19 vaccination or proof of a negative COVID-19 lab test (no at-home tests) taken within 72 hours prior to the event for patrons 12 and older.

Patrons must present a completed paper or digital vaccination record that shows the last shot administered at least 14 days prior to the event, as well as a valid ID. We will also accept a negative COVID-19 lab test result (no at-home tests) that shows the test taken within 72 hours prior to the event

coupled with ID.

In addition, the use of masks is highly recommended inside VMNH, as well as on grounds while interacting with staff and vendors.

This policy applies to anyone who enters the grounds and building, including guests, employees, contractors, and volunteers (unless they are actively eating or drinking) and performers (unless they are actively eating, drinking, or performing).

These policies are consistent with the most current recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). Medical and religious exemptions for paid guests, vendors, performers, and VMNH members are not accepted at this event.

Keeping a safe family environment for all is a top priority.

Visit www.vmnh.net/events/dragon-festival for any additional updates or announcements.

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

All real estate advertised in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitations or discrimination based on race, color, sex or national origin," or an intention to make any such preferences, limitation or discrimination. Our readers are informed that all dwellings advertised in this paper are available on an equal opportunity basis. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate or employment which is in violation of the law.

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ADVERTISEMENT FOR SNOW REMOVAL EQUIPMENT SERVICES WITH OPERATOR SIGNUP

The Virginia Department of Transportation invites heavy equipment owners to sign up for the rental of their equipment with operators for SNOW & ICE REMOVAL purposes in Martinsville Residency which includes the counties of Henry, Patrick and Carroll during the winter of 2021-2022. Price per hour shall include operators, fuel, tire chains, supplies and required insurance. VDOT will need dump trucks, pickups with plows, motorgraders, backhoes, dozers, track loaders, tractors, rubber tire loaders and farm tractors. All equipment shall be equipped for night work and be in good mechanical condition to ensure a safe and dependable 24/7 operation. VDOT reserves the right to determine acceptability of equipment size and condition for the task. Contractors submitting prices meeting the requirements of the Agreement may be contracted with and may be eligible to receive a mobilization payment. Contractors must submit their application on the electronic M7B bidding site at <https://www.plow4va.com/>. All new and returning Contractors must be active in the Virginia eProcurement Portal (eVA) in order to do business with the Commonwealth of Virginia (<https://eva.virginia.gov/>). 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. Questions can be directed to the Martinsville Residency from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday - Friday. Phone: 276-629-2582 Email: SalemDistrictSnow@vdot.virginia.gov EEO/AA Employer

COUNTY OF HENRY REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a public hearing has been scheduled for **October 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following this public hearing, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the application to the Board of Supervisors. The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing on the following application on **October 26, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. The purpose of this public hearing is to receive input into the possible rezoning of property. Following are the specifics of the public hearing.
Case R-21-17 JRS Realty Partners, LLC/James Cherney
The property is located at 100 Marshall Way in the Horsepasture District. The Tax Map number is 40.2/75. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 2.85-acres from Commercial District B-1 to Suburban Residential District S-R. The developer plans to convert the building into apartment units. Once rezoned, an approved Special Use Permit is also required. The application for this request may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Lee H. Clark, AICP Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

Axton Solar, LLC will host a community meeting on Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 6 p.m. at the Galilean House of Worship, located at 5078 A.L. Philpott Highway, Martinsville, Virginia 24112. Representatives of Axton Solar, LLC will be present to discuss its proposed solar energy generation facility to be located in the vicinity of Axton, Virginia. Interested members of the public are invited to attend in person. This meeting will be conducted in accordance with all Virginia Department of Health guidelines. If you would like to participate by telephone or by computer you may find additional information and instructions here: <https://axtonsolarproject.info/>



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Community cleans UP(town)

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

A group of volunteers gathered in Uptown Martinsville last Saturday for a volunteer cleanup day, a small but significant part of the ongoing effort to revitalize Uptown Martinsville.

Volunteers gathered at the TAD space in Uptown at 8 a.m., where they were welcomed by

Uptown Partnership Director Kathy Deacon and Martinsville City Council member Danny Turner, who said the city was fully invested in the Uptown revitalization effort.

Quoting the movie “The Shawshank Redemption,” he said that, with recent controversies swirling around the city’s reversion to a town, it was time to “get busy living or get busy dying,”

and with events like this cleanup effort, “Martinsville is going to get busy living.”

For several hours, the volunteers walked around Uptown, examining sidewalks, alleyways, and parking lots while pulling weeds, blowing leaves, and picking up litter ranging from beer cans to broken bottles to cigarette butts.

It’s all about instilling a sense of

care for the community, Deacon said.

“It’s projects like these that build community between neighbors, and it gets the community engaged in what’s happening up here,” she said. “This is just a small piece of what happens in the revitalization process, when people get together, they do work like this, and then all of a sudden, there’s this new sense of pride, this

new opportunity to move past the status quo.”

The youngest volunteer, seven-year-old Emery Taylor, said events like the cleanup are “important because you should love your community.”

Turner agreed, and added that, especially on the issue of reversion, “Whatever the end result is, we’re still one big community, Martinsville and Henry County.”



Martinsville UP Director Kathy Deacon and City Council member Danny Turner welcomed the group of volunteers at the TAD Space.



Seven-year-old Emery Taylor with her mother Ashley Taylor pick up trash in the alleyway behind the Holt Building in Uptown Martinsville.



Martinsville Rotary Club members Dennis Reeves (left) and Joe Keiper, director of the Virginia Museum of Natural History, participate in the Uptown cleanup project.



Martinsville City Council member Danny Turner helps pick up trash in the Bridge Street Parking Lot during the Uptown Partnership’s volunteer cleanup day.

Authorities seek information in alleged stabbing incident

Martinsville Police Officers were dispatched to the 1100 block of Chatham Heights Road in reference to a stabbing on September 21, around 3:52 p.m.

Upon arrival, officers located two people with non-life-threatening stab wounds.

A preliminary investigation determined that

the stabbing did not occur at the location, and authorities are still trying to determine the actual location of the alleged stabbing incidents.

Authorities reported they are receiving little cooperation from those involved in this case and ask anyone with any information about the incident to call

Martinsville Police Lt. Sandy Hines at 276-403-5328 or Crime Stoppers at 276-63CRIME (276-632-7463).

Crime Stoppers is an anonymous tip line which awards up to \$2,500 for information related to crime. The nature of the crime and the information provided determine the amount paid.

Blaze

from page 1



Crews from Martinsville, Henry County, and a number of other volunteer fire departments worked to contain the blaze at the Southern Finishing Co. in Martinsville.

that an accumulation of sawdust on top of the dust bin itself caught flame when a spark from one of the chimneys fell onto it.

In addition to Martinsville Emergency Services, Anderson said help came from Henry County Public Safety, the Martinsville Police Department, and many local volunteer fire departments, some of whom had to leave the site to go to work after a long night of fighting the fire. He added that Martinsville called their 7 a.m., or C shift, in early, and brought more crew members back to help cover emergency calls as needed.

At its highest point, nearly 25 firefighters from both city and county battled the blaze and helped contain it. The sawdust added an extra element of danger to the firefighting process.

The company uses the sawdust it creates as fuel, Anderson said. “What they cut off of the wood, they use as fuel to help run the mechanisms inside of the plant.”

However, there is a science to the sawdust and how it is mixed to make it more, or less, combustible, he said, and added the mixture in the hopper was half regular sawdust and half of what was described to him as “fluff,” which makes the mixture more explosive.

“Which is part of what

we have to keep in mind with this,” Anderson said, and added that if firefighters had managed the incident differently, the already dangerous situation could have quickly turned deadly.

“If we’d just gone in and opened the lid to put water down in there, it could have very easily exploded,” Anderson said.

No injuries were reported, and employees reported to work at the facility Tuesday morning.

Crews cleared the scene around 11:30 Tuesday but returned about eight hours later when the fire rekindled, Anderson said. The return call was expected, given the nature of sawdust fires.

“We had prepared for that just in case,” Anderson said, and added that “with the sawdust ... It is extremely hard to put out that type of fire” because an ember could be easily hidden.

One fire engine and crew responded, Anderson said, and added the second incident did not result in any additional damage.

The company is expecting delivery of a new machine next week which will burn the sawdust at higher temperatures that will be less likely to emit any sparks from the chimneys, thus reducing the chances that a similar sawdust fire would happen again, he added.



Wren's Summer Send-Off

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