

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

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Legislators to consider reversion proposal as Martinsville declines to participate in resolution

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

A pair of bills pertaining to reversion are once again making their way through the General Assembly.

House Bill 173, sponsored by Del. Danny Marshall, R-Danville, and Senate Bill 85, sponsored by State Sen. Bill Stanley, R-Moneta, would put the issue of Martinsville's reversion from a city to a town in the hands of city voters by requiring a referendum on the issue.

Stanley said the public is invited to speak on his bill when it is discussed in committee on Tuesday.

Henry County proposed, via a letter addressed to Martinsville Mayor Kathy Lawson and signed by Board of Supervisors Chairman Jim Adams, that the city and county offer a joint resolution in support of the bills.

"Henry County did not ask for this legislation," the letter stated, "nor did the Board of Supervisors include it on our 2022 General Assembly legislative package. It appears that these bills were filed based on citizen requests to" Marshall and Stanley.

In the letter, the county called the proposed legislation "a perfect opportunity to engage with



PHOTOS BY RAY REYNOLDS
State Sen. Bill Stanley (left) and Del. Danny Marshall (right) recently sponsored proposals requiring a city-wide referendum on reversion prior to a special court granting Martinsville town status.

the public and to listen to and learn from the people who will be impacted by reversion."

"Our citizens, both city and county, clearly feel excluded from this process and they have spoken through their actions and their request for these bills," the letter stated. It also referenced the public hearing held by the Commission on Local Government (CLG) during which "several individuals expressed their dissatisfaction with the public's exclusion from the reversion process."

Lawson said Martinsville will not join with the county to offer a resolution. The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved its own resolution on Wednesday.

In a statement, she said, "over the last decade, Henry County has repeatedly sought to change the framework for how the reversion process works, and their goal has always been to prevent Martinsville—and only

See **Reversion**, page 7



Martinsville City Attorney and Assistant City Manager Eric Monday has been selected as a fellow by the Virginia Law Foundation. The foundation's fellow program honors Virginia attorneys who are leaders both within their profession and within their communities.

City attorney receives prestigious honor from Virginia Law Foundation

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

City Attorney and Assistant City Manager Eric Monday was selected as a 2022 fellow by the Virginia Law Foundation (VLF).

The organization is, according to board president John McGavin, "the preeminent nonprofit organization in the law business in our state."

"Nominated confidentially by their peers, Virginia Law Foundation

Fellows are recognized for leadership in their practices, their communities, and the Commonwealth," the foundation's website states. "The Class of 2022 joins a group of more than 600 of the best and brightest legal practitioners in Virginia who are committed to the highest ideals of the law and exemplify the concept of citizen lawyer."

The VLF will host a virtual induction ceremony for

See **Honor**, page 6

Williams sees silver lining in legislative gaffe

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Freshman Del. Wren Williams, R-Stuart, recently was propelled into the national spotlight when a bill he sponsored during his first General Assembly session erroneously referenced a debate between Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

That debate never took place. Rather, Lincoln debated Senator Stephen Douglas.

The Division of Legislative Services (DLS) released a statement claiming responsibility for the error.

Williams said he submitted the bill to DLS and asked them to "format it, polish it up for me, and submit it to the clerk's office. Next thing you know, they're in my office apologizing for an error."

He said he questioned the agency about why language that he did not ask



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Del. Wren Williams, (seated in foreground), said the national attention directed toward an error in his bill banning critical race theory from schools has helped shine a spotlight on the bill itself and the issues it seeks to address. The bill, HB 781, incorrectly references debates between Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, which never took place. Historically, Lincoln debated Senator Stephen Douglas. The Division of Legislative Services has claimed responsibility for the error.

for was added to his bill.

Williams said DLS was "very apologetic" and he understood the department was "incredibly swamped with every-

thing that's going on this month."

The DLS had recently dealt with a ransomware

See **Williams**, page 6

Patrick hospital, abortion, churches topics in Williams' legislation

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Though one bill sponsored by Del. Wren Williams, R-Stuart, has made national headlines, the Patrick County native has been hard at work during his first week in the General Assembly, crafting legislation that he hopes will fulfill his campaign promises and the mandates he feels he was given by voters in the November election.

In addition to his headline-making bill to ban critical race theory (CRT - see related story), Williams said he has introduced several other pieces of legislation including one that has yet to be entered into the state's system, but which Williams said he is "most excited about for Patrick County."

The bill directs the Virginia Department of Health to investigate and examine the feasibility of reopening that county's hospital, either entirely or in a limited capacity "so that we can use the recently-renovated emergency department.

"This is a bill that I put in on behalf of the people of Patrick County who are obviously in need of an emergency room, healthcare services, EMS services,"

he said. "I feel like this bill creates a door that Patrick County can walk through in order to really start to see some traction or movement on a problem that stretches back as far as 2018."

Williams said the Division of Legislative Services is still working through all the submitted bills, and this one was not yet numbered or available to view, but he anticipates it soon would be.

He proposed another bill which would "eliminate the ability of our executive branch to ever close our places of worship ever again," Williams said of House Bill 775 (HB 775).

Churches across the state were closed in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic as part of a statewide lockdown.

"I believe fully in the protections under the First Amendment, which say we have the right to peaceably assemble, and we have the right to practice our religion freely," Williams said. "In the past couple of years, we have seen those rights trampled on. This bill would eliminate the ability to continue trampling on those rights."

Williams also introduced House Bill 776 (HB 776), which he described as

See **Legislation**, page 6



Kate Keller, president of the Harvest Foundation, said the organization's new strategic direction for 2022-2026 was created using an "intentional equity lens" and will seek, in part, to help communities who feel invisible in MHC to have a voice.

Foundation to focus on equity, inclusion, revitalization, and investment in hope

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

The Harvest Foundation on Wednesday announced its new 2022-2026 strategic plan and direction that focuses on the idea of hope.

The new vision features three primary areas of focus, according to Senior Program Officer DeWitt House: thriving youth, a vibrant community, and a resilient and diverse economy.

Accomplishing the first

area will include focusing on partnerships with community members and organizations to provide first-class learning and development opportunities for youngsters, from birth to college.

Part of this will be accomplished through the continuation of the SEED Fund. House said the foundation will focus, too, on learning and development opportunities for early childhood education with an emphasis on quality and affordability.

A vibrant community

also means a healthy community, House said, and added that the foundation will work to support existing health systems to ensure that residents have access to primary and behavioral health care with a special emphasis on destigmatizing mental health and substance abuse services.

The area of a vibrant community focus means the foundation will explore improved affordable housing and broadband expansion. House said it also

See **Foundation**, page 5

VISIT

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FOR MORE UPDATES



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Saturday, Jan. 22

Soar to the Virginia Museum of Natural History (21 Starling Avenue, Martinsville) for the grand unveiling of its newest special exhibit, "The Science of Flight!" This day of flight-focused fun includes live birds of prey, balloon animals, food trucks, flight-themed activities and crafts, and more. The first 500 children in attendance will receive a free giveaway. For more information and pricing, visit www.vnmh.net.

The Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department (17815 A.L. Philpott Highway, Ridgeway) will host a country buffet breakfast from 6-10 a.m. The cost for adults is \$8 and children under 10 can eat for \$4. All carry outs are \$8.

TheatreWorks will present another fantastic "Piano Bar" at the Black Box Theatre (44 Franklin Street) in Uptown Martinsville. Tickets are \$10. Get yours at www.twcp.net.

Monday, Jan. 24

The Patrick & Henry Community College Board ad hoc Nominating Committee will meet at 11 a.m. in the Frith Conference Room #145, 645 Patriot Avenue, Martinsville to prepare a slate of officers and committee members for the next four years. This is a public meeting, but the committee will not receive public comment.

The Martinsville City School Board will hold its regular meeting at 6 p.m. in city council chambers of the Martinsville City Municipal Building (55 West Church Street, Martinsville.)

Wednesday, Jan. 26

The West Piedmont Health District will provide free PCR testing for COVID-19 from 12:30-4 p.m. at the National Guard Armory parking lot (315 Commonwealth Boulevard, Martinsville.) The tests are limited to the first 100 participants.

The Henry County Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a public hearing at 1 p.m. in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the Henry County Administration Building (3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.) Rocky Ford Solar Energy, LLC has requested a special use permit to allow for the construction of a large scale solar energy facility.

Thursday, Jan. 27

Patrick & Henry Community College hosts a social media workshop, Ask the Expert, from 12-1:30 p.m. This is a perfect, judgement-free opportunity to ask anything, even as basic as, "how do I log on to Facebook?" This workshop will be held at P&HCC's Dalton

IDEA Center (26 Fayette Street, Martinsville.) Registration is \$15 at pre-registration is required. To register, call (276) 656-5461 or visit ph.augusoft.net.

Friday, Jan. 28

Henry County will hold a public real estate auction beginning at 12 p.m. in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the Henry County Administration Building (3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.) A list of properties to be auctioned can be found at taxva.com/rs-tax-sales/henry-county-non-judicial-sale/.

Saturday, Jan. 29

The Spencer-Penn Centre (475 Spencer-Penn Road, Spencer) is hosting a paint class. Painting with Genie: Sweet Winter will begin at 1 p.m. at the Centre. All supplies are provided. The cost is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members and ore-registration is required. To save your spot, call (276) 957-5757.

Monday, Jan. 31

The American Red Cross is hosting a blood drive at the Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA (3 Starling Avenue, Martinsville) from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. To schedule an appointment, visit redcrossblood.org.

Wednesday, Feb. 2

The West Piedmont Health District will provide free PCR testing for COVID-19 from 12:30-4 p.m. at the National Guard Armory parking lot (315 Commonwealth Boulevard, Martinsville.) The tests are limited to the first 100 participants.

Thursday, Feb. 3

Patrick & Henry Community College hosts a professional development workshop, Wow with Public Speaking, from 9-11 a.m. This class can be attended virtually or in person and the cost is \$49. To register, visit ph.augusoft.net or call (276) 656-0260.

The American Red Cross is hosting a blood drive at the Martinsville Elks Lodge (300 Fairy Street Ext., Martinsville) from 12-6 p.m. To schedule an appointment, visit redcrossblood.org.

Friday, Feb. 4

Make magical memories with your little princess at Piedmont Arts' Magical Mask-erade. This daddy-daughter-style dance offers an enchanted night of music and dancing featuring kid-friendly tunes from DJ What. Guests can create fun crafts and enjoy light snacks. The Magical Mask-erade will be held at Piedmont Arts (215 Starling Avenue, Martinsville) from 6-8 p.m. Tickets are \$20 per non-member couple with a \$5 charge for each additional child.

The event is free for Piedmont Arts members. Get your tickets at the museum or at PiedmontArts.org.

Saturday, Feb. 5

Join the Spencer-Penn Centre and Jessica Minter for Charcuterie for your Cutie! Create your own charcuterie board to take home to share with someone or enjoy by yourself. All supplies will be provided. The cost is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members. Pre-register by Jan. 31 by calling (276) 957-5757.

Wednesday, Feb. 9

The West Piedmont Health District will provide free PCR testing for COVID-19 from 12:30-4 p.m. at the National Guard Armory parking lot (315 Commonwealth Boulevard, Martinsville.) The tests are limited to the first 100 participants.

Friday, Feb. 11

It's Music Night at the Spencer-Penn Centre! Visit the Centre (475 Spencer-Penn Road, Spencer) for music by the Gap Civil old time band in Alumni Hall. Doors open at 5 p.m. and music begins at 6:20. Admission is a \$5 donation to the Centre and concessions will be sold.

Sunday, Feb. 20

The Spencer-Penn Centre (475 Spencer-Penn Road, Spencer) will host a barn quilt class from 12-4 p.m. All supplies are provided and pricing is based on size, ranging from \$75 to \$85. The registration deadline is Friday, Feb. 11. For more details or to register, call (276) 957-5757.

ONGOING

The Warming Center of Martinsville and Henry County, located at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church (725 Beechnut Lane), is open to provide a warm place to sleep, a warm meal, and personal supplies at no cost to those in need. Anyone who needs transportation to the center can be picked up at 6:45 p.m. at the Martinsville library and 6:25 p.m. at the Collinsville library. Weekly schedules are posted at the Martinsville library, YMCA, and on the MHC Warming Center Facebook page every Saturday. For more information, call (276) 207-9660. Anyone who wishes to volunteer at the Warming Center or make a donation can find more information on Facebook or at www.foresthillspc.com/mhc-warming-shelter.html.

Patrick & Henry Community College is organizing a virtual Leadership Learning Community! If you have leadership questions, P&HCC can connect you with answers through this virtual community. Participants have the opportunity to collaborate and brainstorm current, real-time challenges and

successes with fellow leaders while learning from each other or gaining insights from professionals skilled in areas of concern. Sessions will be held from 4-5 p.m. every other Wednesday, through June 22. Prices range from \$225 for 12 sessions all the way to \$25 for individual sessions. For more information or to register, visit ph.augusoft.net or call (276) 656-0260.

Piedmont Arts hosts three exhibits: "Our Living Past: Platinum Portraits of Southern Music Makers," "Dear B.J.: Postcards from the Pandemic," and "Tara Compton." All exhibits run through March 12. Museum admission is free.

Henry County Parks & Recreation invites you out for a trek along the trail! Meet as a group and walk along a different trail each week. Explore the trails of Martinsville-Henry County, make new friends, and get some fresh air and exercise. Call the HCPR Senior Services office at (276) 634-4644 to find out where the week's trek is happening. Trail Trekkers meet Thursday of each week (weather permitting) at 1 p.m. in the fall and winter and 9:15 a.m. in spring and summer.

The Blue Ridge Regional Library offers free one-day passes to the Virginia Museum of Natural History and the Henry County YMCA with your library card. The passes are good for one day and exclude special events. There is a wait period before you can check out the pass again. For more details and exclusions, visit brrl.lib.va.us.

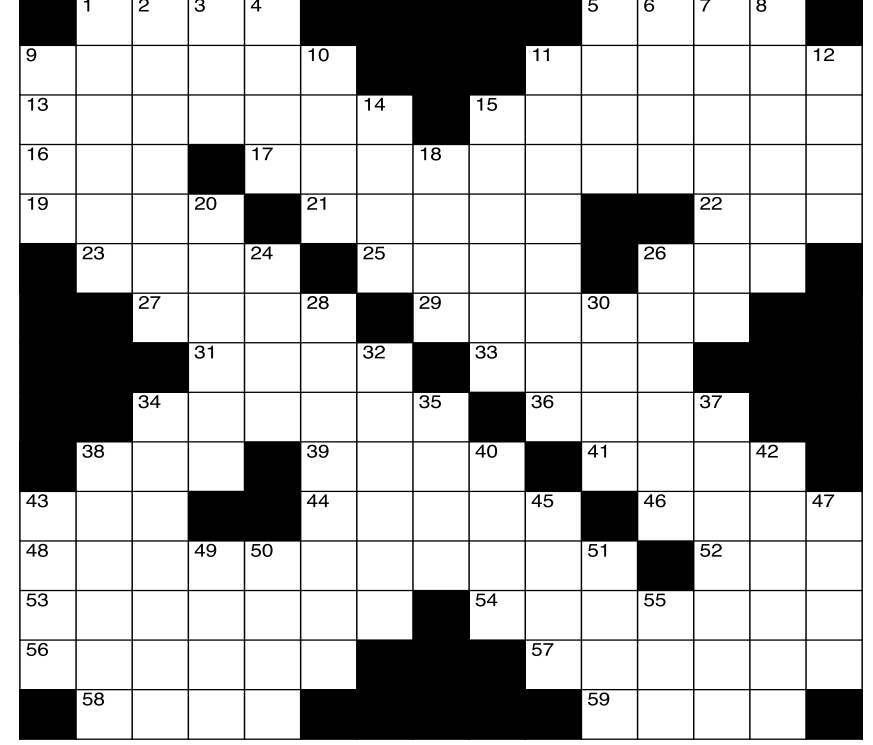
The Fontaine Ruritan Club hosts Bingo every Tuesday at its headquarters (1903 Joseph Martin Highway, Martinsville.) Doors open at 5:30 and games begin at 7. Money from Bingo supports community service awards, scholarships, and other community efforts.

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.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| CLUES ACROSS | 33. Witnesses | CLUES DOWN | 28. Earnings |
| 1. Breathe noisily | 34. Caulked | 1. Illinois city | 30. Close by |
| 5. ___ Nui, Easter Island | 36. Satisfy | 2. One of the original disciples chosen by Christ | 32. Small integers |
| 9. Reddish browns | 38. R&B performer ___ Lo | 3. Young form of a louse | 34. Fixed in place |
| 11. Simple shoes | 39. Monetary units of Macao | 4. Type of powder | 35. Used to treat Parkinson's disease |
| 13. Produce alcohol illegally | 41. Give advice, explain | 5. Finger millet | 37. Large, imposing building |
| 15. Home to famed golf tournament | 43. Possesses | 6. Share a common boundary | 38. A rooflike shelter |
| 16. Tax collector | 44. Turn back | 7. Assumed as a fact | 40. Stiff, hairlike structure |
| 17. Famous people | 46. Gentlemen | 8. Provide clear evidence of | 42. Print errors |
| 19. Urban area | 48. One who fertilizes | 9. Invests in little enterprises | 43. To show disapproval |
| 21. Units of syllable weight | 52. Italian monk title (prefix) | 10. A way to be | 45. Body of traditions |
| 22. Pituitary hormone (abbr.) | 53. Parties | 11. Monies given in support | 47. Without |
| 23. Dismounted | 54. Type of horse | 12. Fashion accessory | 49. ___ Clapton, musician |
| 25. Actor Damon | 56. Cuts in half | 14. Steal | 50. Dangerous illegal drug |
| 26. Vietnamese offensive | 57. Raises | 15. Becomes less intense | 51. Infrequent |
| 27. Retail term | 58. Expresses contempt or disgust | 18. Geological times | 55. Sound unit |
| 29. Netted | 59. Ancient Italian-Greek colony | 20. Hooray! | |
| 31. Partner to carrots | | 24. Monetary unit | |
| | | 26. Male reproductive organs | |

Congressional staff plan visit

U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith's Ninth District staff will be available in Henry and Patrick counties on January 26.

Staff are scheduled to be at the Bassett Public Library, 3969 Fairstone Parkway, Bassett, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Congressional staff will be in the Conference Room of the Patrick County Administration Building from 12:30 to 2 p.m. The building is located at 106 Rucker Street, Stuart.

In the event of inclement weather (heavy snow, sleet, icy rain, etc.), traveling office hours may be rescheduled to avoid putting constituents at risk. If a county's or city's schools are closed, then its office hours will be closed as well.

Call the Christiansburg Office at (540) 381-5671 or the Abingdon Office at (276) 525-1405 with any questions or to schedule an appointment.

One dead in Saturday blaze

Martinsville Fire & EMS responded to a 911 structure fire call at 24 Barton Street on January 15.

The call received around 7:51 p.m. originated from a neighbor reporting that he saw flames inside the home.

Crews initially arriving at the scene found flames showing from the upper left bedroom area and attic of the home. Firefighters began the

fire attack while simultaneously searching the home.

Crews found a body located in the room where the initial flames were seen. Unfortunately, the person had succumbed to the effects of the fire.

The remains were sent to the Medical Examiner's Office for official identification and cause of death.

"We would like to ask the community to share

in our thoughts and prayers for the family during this tragic event," Martinsville Fire Chief Ted Anderson said.

With assistance from a Martinsville Police Department investigator, the Martinsville Fire & EMS Fire Marshal's office was on the scene until approximately 3 a.m. in search of a cause and origin of the fire. The blaze remains under investigation.

Submit your community news and photos

to newsreporter@theenterprise.net

Another charge issued in Jan. 14 incident that left two dead and two injured

An alleged shooting incident at a local restaurant on Friday, January 14 resulted in two deaths, two people injured and a Ridgeway man charged with first degree murder, according to a release from the Henry County Sheriff's Office.

Laquon Deshawn Moss, 26, also was charged with three counts use of a firearm during the commission of a felony, two counts malicious wounding and one count possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

He is currently held in the Henry County Jail without bond, the release stated.

By mid-week, a second person also was charged in connection with the incident, according to a release.

Investigators determined a gun used in the

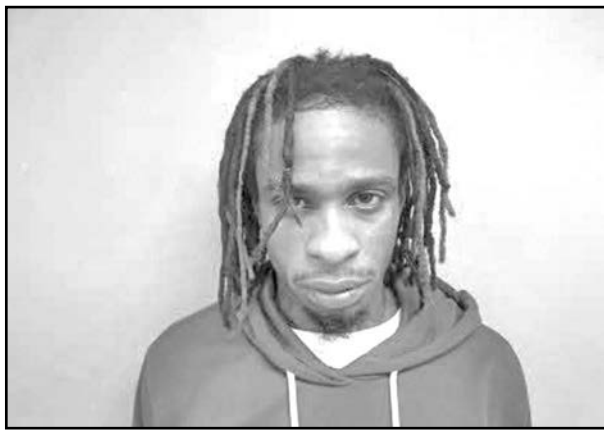
shooting allegedly was taken from the scene. A video showed Orland Raceem Johnson's gun was taken after Johnson had been shot, the release stated.

Delano Tomaz Ross, 44, of Martinsville, was charged with possession of a firearm by a violent convicted felon and the willful concealment of physical evidence; both charges are felonies.

Ross is currently held in the Henry County Jail without bond.

The Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center received a call around 11:05 p.m. Friday to report that several people were shot during an incident at El Parral Mexican Restaurant, located at 670 Commonwealth Blvd., Martinsville.

Deputies responding to the scene found one man suffering from mul-



Laquon Deshawn Moss

tiple gunshot wounds to the torso and legs, according to the release.

He was identified as Orlando Raceem Johnson, 31, of Martinsville. Johnson died due to the gunshot wounds, according to the release.

Investigators determined an argument allegedly ensued between several people on the sidewalk of the

restaurant, according to the release. The argument allegedly culminated in Laquon Moss and Johnson producing handguns and shooting. Moss allegedly shot Johnson multiple times, the release stated.

As Moss allegedly fired at Johnson, two other people suffered non-life-threatening injuries: a 25-year-old woman suffered a



Delano Tomaz Ross

gunshot wound in the leg, and a 32-year-old man suffered a gunshot wound in the arm, according to the release.

Preliminary findings of the investigation indicate that a bullet allegedly fired from Johnson's gun struck Malik Douglas, 25, of Martinsville. Douglas died of his wounds, according to the release.

Anyone with infor-

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

State police to investigate officer involved shooting in Patrick

One is dead following an officer-involved shooting that occurred shortly after 7 p.m. Friday, January 14, in the Woolwine area of Patrick County, according to Sheriff Dan Smith.

Barry Dean Compton, 64, of Woolwine, died at the scene of the incident, according to a release from the Virginia State Police.

The incident started to

unfold when the Patrick County Sheriff's Office 911 Communications Center received a call from a woman involved in an alleged domestic dispute in the 1700 block of Mill House Road at 6:59 p.m. Friday, Jan. 14, according to Smith and a release from the Virginia State Police.

During the call, the 911 dispatcher allegedly heard a man threatening to kill a

woman, Smith said.

A deputy sheriff and a trooper with the Virginia State Police responded to the call, Smith said.

Both officers marked on scene at 7:14 p.m., with the trooper arriving seconds before the deputy, the sheriff said.

As they entered the residence, a man allegedly pointed a firearm at the officers,

according to the release. The officers told the man to drop the firearm. He allegedly refused to comply. The trooper discharged his firearm.

The man was struck, the release stated.

A firearm was recovered at the scene and no officers were injured, the release stated.

The incident remains under investigation.

In accordance with

Virginia State Police policy, the trooper will be placed on administrative leave until the investigation is completed. At the completion of the investigation, the Virginia State Police, Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Salem Division, will provide the evidence obtained from the shooting to the Patrick County Commonwealth's Attorney Office for adjudication.

Youngkin promotes unity, agenda at inauguration

Republican Glenn Youngkin was sworn in Saturday as Virginia's 74th governor on the steps of the state Capitol.

The political newcomer and former private equity executive is the commonwealth's first Republican governor since Bob McDonnell's 2009 victory.

The commonwealth also made history in electing Republicans Winsome Sears as lieutenant governor and Jason Miyares as attorney general. They are the first Black woman and Latino man to hold statewide office, respectively.

"The people of Virginia just elected the most diverse leadership in commonwealth history," Youngkin said in his inauguration speech. "Sending a message that Virginia is big enough for the hopes and dreams of a diverse people."

Sears emigrated from Kingston, Jamaica at 6 years old. She made history in 2001 as the first Black Republican woman to win a House seat, and she did so by beating out a Democratic incumbent in a majority Black district.

"It actually encouraged me to do what I wanted to do," said Jeanette Harris-Robinson, who is originally from Jamaica. She traveled from Florida to support Sears, who is her cousin.

"I was a little bit afraid of actually moving forward because I want to run for [office in] the city of Florida, for my city," Harris-Robinson said. "Coming out here and seeing my cousin

and looking at her – it just opened up a whole new world."

The 30-degree weather didn't impact turnout. Roughly 6,000 people were expected to attend, many who dressed in their Sunday best to watch the inaugural ceremonies.

Youngkin will lead a divided government, with a slim majority of Republicans in the House of Delegates and Democrats narrowly in control of the Senate.

"My fellow Virginians, the spirit of Virginia is alive and well," Youngkin said. "And together we will strengthen it."

A parade with organizations ranging from law enforcement to STEM education was held after the inauguration ceremony. The Virginia Union University choir performed a song they wrote for Youngkin, which touched on the theme of Virginia united to "rebuild and reimagine" the state's future.

"Together we'll renew the promise of Virginia, so it will be the best place to live, work and raise a family," he said.

Youngkin signed nine Executive Orders and two Executive Directives shortly after taking oath, ranging from public health to withdrawing from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

The first order prevents the use of "divisive concepts" in education, including critical race theory. Youngkin's campaign centered on ending critical race theory in public education. The theory is not currently taught in K-12 public schools but became a contentious

talking point during the gubernatorial race. There will be a review of all policies to identify and end "inherently divisive concepts."

The second order eliminates a mask mandate in schools. Youngkin also signed a directive eliminating the vaccine mandate for state employees. The moves were made a day after Virginia reported over 17,000 new cases of COVID-19. Richmond Public Schools Superintendent Jason Kamras stated shortly afterward on social media that the district would maintain its mask mandate.

The new governor has more planned in alignment with his campaign promises.

"It's a new day in Virginia, but the work is only beginning," Youngkin stated.

(Capital News Service is a program of Virginia Commonwealth University's Robertson



School of Media and Culture. Students in the program provide state government coverage for a variety of media outlets in Virginia.)

By Tarazha Jenkins and Josephine Walker
Capital News Service



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OPINION

They walk among us

There was a time when I enjoyed conspiracy theories.

I didn't BELIEVE in conspiracy theories, to be clear. I just thought they were fun. I never really liked the whole "the moon landing was faked" conspiracy theory; I tended to be drawn to the wacky ones. Paul McCartney died in the 1960s and the surviving Beatles left clues hidden in their albums! A flying saucer crashed in Roswell, New Mexico in 1947! My personal favorite conspiracy theory is that Stevie Wonder is not actually blind, based solely on a video where someone knocks over a mic stand and Wonder appears to catch it before it falls.

Those conspiracy theories are entertaining. There's nothing really at stake. If your uncle believes that Bigfoot stalks the swamps of Arkansas, the chances are low that he's going to ruin Thanksgiving dinner by talking about it all night long.

Conspiracy theories aren't fun anymore, though. I think it started with 9/11, when hucksters, charlatans, and various idiots came up with bizarre

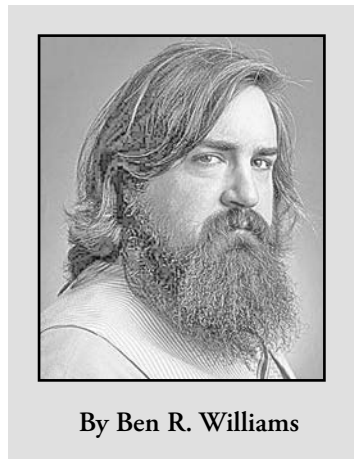
theories to explain why the Twin Towers ACTUALLY fell, as though getting hit by two planes wasn't enough. The 9/11 Truther garbage felt distasteful to me, as though it cheapened the tragedy of the day.

Of course, even the 9/11 Truther stuff feels quaint compared to the conspiracy theories of today. Thanks to QAnon, the most insane theories in history have become mainstream. If your dear sweet grandma spends any time on Facebook, there's a halfway decent chance that she believes most of Hollywood is run by Satan-worshipping cannibal pedophiles, and she'll cut you out of the will if you even float the idea that she's mistaken.

Just how bad has it gotten?

Well, have you heard the name Michael Brian Protzman?

Protzman isn't a household name, unless your household is full of QAnon cultists. Also known as the "Gematria General" by his followers, Protzman is a guy from Washington state who owns a demolition firm. He rose to



By Ben R. Williams

fame amongst the QAnon cult by using ersatz numerology to make various insane predictions, many of them wildly antisemitic in nature. So persuasive is Protzman that he convinced hundreds of his followers to do what might be the literal stupidest thing I have ever heard in my life:

Back in late November and early December, Protzman's followers gathered in Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas to await the triumphant return of John F. Kennedy and John F. Kennedy Jr., who Protzman predicted would appear in order to reinstate Donald Trump as President.

Now, I'm not exactly a history buff, but it's my understanding that JFK died in 1963 when he was shot in Dealey Plaza, and his son died in a plane crash in 1999. Both of these events are pretty well documented. It also seems to me that if I were JFK and I was planning on returning from the dead, Dealey Plaza is just about the last place I would visit. It also seems to me that both JFK and JFK Jr. were pretty famous for being Democrats, so I'm not sure why they would be inclined to support Trump. I guess being dead for decades really changes a person.

It seems almost impossible that any rational human being could actually believe this nonsense, and yet QAnon cult members traveled from around the country to visit Dealey Plaza. Some of them are still there today, milling around aimlessly in MAGA hats and waiting for a 104 year old man who's been dead for 58 years to miraculously appear and somehow make Trump the President again.

Oh, and did I mention that they're also drinking poison?

Yes, that's right. Apparently a bunch of Protzman's followers at Dealey Plaza are drinking

chlorine dioxide from a "communal bowl." Chlorine dioxide is an industrial bleach used in small quantities for disinfecting drinking water, but it's toxic when taken in large amounts. Con artists have marketed it as a cure for everything from cancer to autism, and it's injured plenty of people and even killed a few over the years. Apparently the QAnoners in Dealey Plaza are drinking it to ward off COVID-19. That was the most shocking part to me, since I assumed these people didn't believe COVID was real.

It's tempting to dismiss this sort of madness as the actions of a small lunatic fringe. We all want to believe that the vast majority of Americans still have a firm grip on reality.

Of course, just a couple of days ago, I overheard a conversation between a group of people at a convenience store I frequent. They were discussing how they recently used Ivermectin, America's favorite animal-grade anti-parasitic paste, to treat their recent bouts with COVID.

The lunatics are on the fringe no longer. Now they walk among us.

Richmond Report

Bill Stanley
State Sen.

As we have now completed the first week of the General Assembly's 2022 session, it is good to have the oldest democratic legislative body in the western hemisphere to be back in the historic Virginia Capitol. Other than convening in the Capitol for a little over one week for last August's special budget session, the chambers of the House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia have been vacant since the end of the 2020 session.

If you remember, the House Democrat leadership at that time decided that it should conduct its business by Zoom, while the Senate continued to operate in person, but not at the Capitol, but rather held its sessions in a large audio-

rium in the Virginia Science Museum. Conducting sessions with 100 delegates using video conferencing was confusing to watch and appeared frustrating for our House colleagues. Although senators were far apart from one another inside the Science Museum, being in the same room made it much closer to business as usual. Ultimately, it is not how a legislative body should conduct its business.

But with the historic elections this past November, there's now a Republican majority in the House, with a new Republican speaker and a new leadership team, and they have thankfully decided that democracy works better when it is conducted in person. So, we are once again across the hall from each other in Jefferson's Capitol, as it should be. It goes without saying that meet-

ing in the Capitol makes it much easier to observe longstanding traditions, like convening a joint House and Senate session to hear the Governor's annual State of the Commonwealth address on the opening day of the General Assembly. With only two-and-a-half days remaining in his term, Governor Northam delivered his final address to the joint session, and his trip down memory lane recounting his last four years sounded a lot better than what actually occurred in the Commonwealth. As of noon on this past Saturday, his ability to further shape history has been dramatically reduced.

I am excited that Virginia has a new governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general. Glenn Youngkin, Winsome Sears, and Jason Miyares took their respective oaths in a ceremony on the Capitol's South Portico. This was certainly a significant and welcomed change in leadership and in a new direction for the Commonwealth.

There was a lot of ceremony that accompanies Virginia inaugurating a new governor. The South Portico was adorned with red-white-and-blue bunting and the Capitol was a scene of large bleachers ready to accommodate the thousands of attendees. The weather fully cooperated aside from being a bit on the chilly side, but legislators - who technically serve as hosts for the event - were all there. In addition to the ceremony, which was chock full of traditions, there were a lot of different celebrations, both before and



State Sen. Bill Stanley, R-Moneta, with Congressman Rob Wittman (R-VA1CD) at the Inauguration of Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

after the Inaugural.

Governor-Elect Youngkin talked a lot about his "Day One" agenda, both during the campaign and during his rousing inaugural speech immediately after being sworn in by the Chief Justice of the Virginia Supreme Court.

Governor Youngkin opened his inaugural address with "Today we gather, not as individuals nor as Republican or Democrat but as Virginians." As your Senator for the past 11 years, my legislative history has always been focused on the betterment for all constituents in the 20th District, often with the support from my colleagues across the aisle. It is refreshing to have a governor like Governor Youngkin who will write us, and not constantly divide us like the prior administration.

I was also pleased to hear that his vision for the Commonwealth is "Together we'll renew the

promise of Virginia, so it will be the best place to live, work and raise a family." And addressing the important subject of the education of our children, the Governor pledged to remove politics from the classroom and refocus on math, science and reading instead.

Our economy was also addressed by the Governor. Virginia's economy.

We'll be hearing a lot about his agenda directly from him over the coming weeks.

I am honored that he has asked me to carry some of his "day one" legislative priorities on his behalf. I am confident in our new and most diverse leadership in the history of the Commonwealth, and I hope you are too.

I also have filed several bills that concern workforce training, telemedicine initiatives that will improve the quality of healthcare in our rural and urban areas, school modernization, and

other issues that are important to our region. In next week's report, I will detail all those legislative proposals and continue to report their progress through the senate committees during the next few weeks.

This year, the General Assembly is scheduled to be in session until March 12. And since we're back at the Capitol and in the Pocahontas Building, we're open to the public once again. There are still COVID protocols in place, but we're in a building where face masks are free for those who want them and free-standing hand sanitizer dispensers are located every few feet. If you are visiting the Capitol during this year's session, please stop by our offices on the 5th floor of the Pocahontas Building. You can also let us know your views on any of the issues before the General Assembly by emailing District20@senate.virginia.gov or calling (804) 698-7520.

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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



PHOTO BY GUIDO JANSEN

What to know before burning storm debris

In the wake of recent storms that hit Virginia, officials with the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) are encouraging people to practice safe burning if and when they begin burning yard debris and blown down limbs and trees.

The VDOF regulates open burning and there are several rules, regulations, and tips that residents need to follow to stay safe, stay legal, and avoid undesirable impacts from smoke.

From February 15th through the end of April, it is illegal to burn BEFORE 4 p.m. if you're within 300 feet of woods or dry grass leading to the woods. Visit <https://dof.virginia.gov/wildland-prescribed-fire/wildfire-prevention/before-you-burn/> for complete regulations.

RESPONSIBLE BURNING:

*Start any burn as early as possible

(after 4 p.m. during fire season), so the fire will have time to die down before evening sets in.

*Citizens also need to ensure that they follow any local burning ordinances that are in effect in their area.

*Have enough people on-site to keep the fire attended to and always controlled.

*Keep handy a water hose, shovel, or other means to put out the fire.

*Make sure the fire is completely out before leaving it. This means no smoke and no heat.

*Call 911 for help immediately if your fire escapes. Several minutes may pass before a fire department or the Forestry Department can arrive on the scene.

*Be aware that you might be held liable for the cost of suppression and damages to the property of others.

Burn piles should be:

*Located in an area that has been cleared down to bare soil.

*Less than 10 feet in diameter.

*At least 25 feet from any forested area (grasslands, brush or wildlands).

*At least 25 feet from your home or other combustible structure.

*At least 50 feet from any public roadway.

BURNING "DON'TS":

*Don't burn household garbage (including paper products), treated lumber, plastics, rubber materials, tires, pesticides, paint and aerosol containers. Burning these items is illegal.

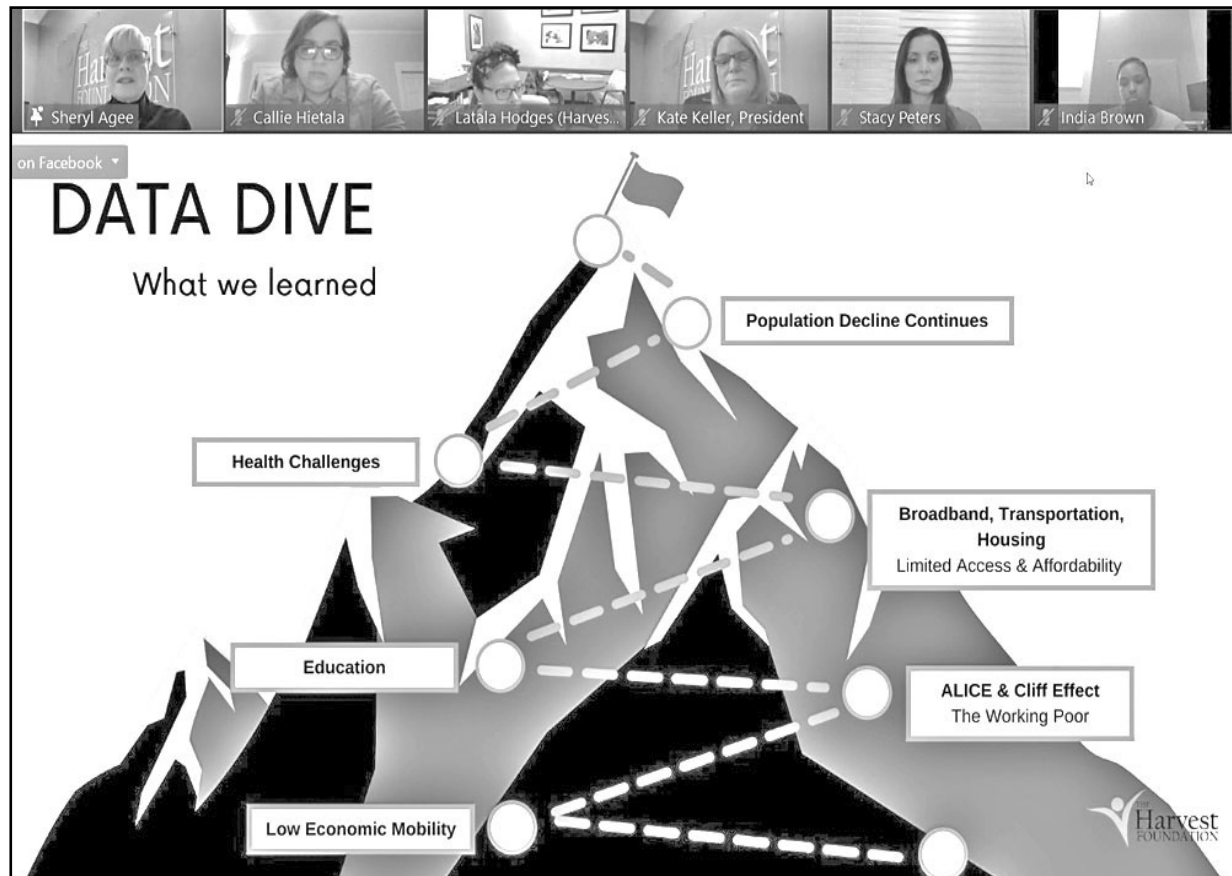
*Don't burn wet materials, as this creates excessive smoke.

*Don't burn on windy days.

*Don't leave a fire unattended, even for a moment. Escaped debris fires can spread quickly.

Foundation

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Sheryl Agee, senior operating officer at the Harvest Foundation, discussed what the foundation learned about the issues facing Martinsville and Henry County that helped inform its new direction. The foundation's new strategy will focus on thriving youth, a vibrant community, a resilient and diverse economy, and continued operational excellence.

will look to “help create space for honest conversations about equity, diversity, and inclusion.”

A resilient and diverse economy supports efforts to increase jobs and the tax base while building a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem, which will work to promote talent that helps form and grow companies and develops opportunities so everyone

can participate.

The foundation will work to strengthen systems lessening the effects of benefits loss and helping families overcome poverty.

“We want to focus not only on who’s thriving, but who’s not,” House said, adding that the foundation will continue to invest in the nonprofit community, helping to

build capacity so organizations can “meet people where they are.”

The announcement comes after a year-long process of data collection and analysis, as well as extensive community input through focus groups, work groups, and public surveys.

Kate Keller, president of the foundation, said the plan was developed with

the “use of an intentional equity lens,” and emphasized inclusion.

Senior Operating Officer Sheryl Agee said that, over the course of the past year, the foundation “looked back to see what worked, what didn’t, what needs still existed, and listened to community voices.”

From that, Keller said officials discovered that

“despite our success with new jobs and investment, our poverty rates have not budged. We learned that many in our community feel invisible and not engaged, that our community shares a general lack of hope and optimism. People feel stuck and don’t share a common vision for the future.”

Agee noted that, in Martinsville and Henry County, single women likely will need some college to make a living wage, while single men are more likely to earn a living regardless of educational attainment.

She said there are continued challenges posed by the limited access and affordability of broadband, transportation, and housing, as well as issues facing the community related to addiction and mental health services.

Agee said that the area’s population decline has continued, but the loss is slowing, “which suggests to us we have turned a corner.”

However, the remaining population is “becoming more diverse,” Agee said, “with an increased Hispanic-Latinx population.”

Josh Blancas, who owns The Ground Floor in Uptown, said that he participated in one of seven work groups that helped the foundation develop this new strategy. The diversity of the

groups offered a lot of different perspectives on various issues. The focus of his group was building community hope.

“Everything we talked about in our work group is perfectly reflected in this strategic plan,” he said. “This isn’t the result of a few voices, but of many voices.”

“The North Star of our plan is hope,” Agee said. “We feel it signifies our desire to help build a community where all have a voice and feel empowered to make a change, however small.”

Bill Kirby, chairman of the Harvest Foundation’s Board of Directors, said that, typically, the results of Harvest’s strategic planning process is something “much more tangible” than the concept of hope.

“When we convened these groups, each and everyone brought up in one way or another some sort of hope, and more specifically the loss of hope or lack of hope,” he said. “It became apparent to us at Harvest that hope—the thought that your tomorrow is going to be better than your today”—was something the organization would have to address for other initiatives to be successful.

“We’ve bitten off a lot to chew,” Kirby said. “It’s ambitious, yes, but you don’t have good results unless you’re willing to take a risk.”

OBITUARIES

Donna Gayle Spencer Hancock

Donna Gayle Spencer Hancock, 59, of Bassett, Virginia, passed away Sunday, January 16, 2022, at her home. She was born May 16, 1962, in Martinsville, to the late Winfred Eugene Spencer and Elizabeth Virginia Ridinger Spencer Willard. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brothers, Martin “Marty” Wayne Spencer and Merle Allen Spencer.



greatly loved spending time with her family and friends.

Donna is survived by the love of her life, her life-long sweetheart, her husband, Kenneth “Kenny” Hancock; sister, Sandra Spencer Fulcher; brother, Michael Eugene Spencer; stepfather, Lee Roy Willard; and many nieces and nephews.

The funeral will be Friday, January 21, 2022, at 2 p.m. at Wright Funeral Service Chapel, with Rev. David Gaylor, Jr. officiating. Burial will be private.

Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at www.wrightfuneralservices.net.

Steven Wayne Rutledge

Steven Wayne Rutledge, 52, of Bassett, VA passed away on Friday, January 14, 2022, at his residence. He was born on April 27, 1969, in Beckley, WV to the late Delilah Faye Stump and David Webster Rutledge.



of Patrick Springs, VA, and half-sister, Vicky Rutledge of Bluefield, WV, and half-brother, Rusty Rutledge of Bluefield, WV. Also, surviving are eleven grandchildren, many nieces and nephews, and cousins.

Mr. Rutledge was a master plumber.

He is survived by his wife of thirty-eight years, Angela W. Rutledge of the home; daughters, Santana Kaufholz of Bassett, VA, Amber Robertson (Christopher) of Reidsville, NC, Stephanie Rutledge (Terry Roberts) of Bassett, VA, Amanda Rutledge (Daniel Calfee) of Bassett, VA, and Heather Church (Jerry) of Bassett, VA. He is also survived by his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Ted Williams (Judy)

Services, with the funeral to be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, January 21, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services. Burial will be in Henry Memorial Park. Pastor Joey McNeil will officiate the service at Norris Funeral Services. Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, VA is serving the Rutledge family.

Online condolences may be made at norrisfuneral.com.

Bettie Barrow Young

Bettie Barrow Young, 88, of Martinsville, VA passed away Tuesday, January 18, 2022. She was born August 10, 1933, to the late James Edward Barrow and Agnes Dillon Kallam Barrow. She was also preceded in death by her daughter, Kelly Lyle Young and sister, Elsie Joyce.



She is survived by her husband, Posey G. Young, Sr.; sons, B. Michael Young and Posey G. Young, Jr.; sister, Peggy Purcell; five grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

Bettie was a loving mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother.

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

Patricia Fern Stanley

On January 16, 2022, Patricia Fern Stanley passed away at Kindred Hospital, Greensboro, NC. She was born on January 14, 1944, in Martinsville, VA to the late Gaynell Wilson Stanley and S. Earl Stanley.



Baptist Church for over 65 years serving many areas of ministry. Her greatest joy was her involvement in these ministries.

Due to Covid-19, there will not be a visitation and a private graveside service will be held at Roselawn Burial Park.

Memorial donations can be made to Starling Avenue Baptist Church.

Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, VA is serving the Stanley family.

Online condolences may be made at norrisfuneral.com.

She is survived by her sisters, Linda Conner (David) of Collinsville, VA, and Joyce Johnnides (Vic) of Jacksonville, FL, brothers, Larry Stanley (Judy) of Ridgeway, VA, and Andrew Stanley of Greensboro, NC. She is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

She was a member of Starling Avenue

Binh Van Doan

Binh Van Doan, 51, of Martinsville, VA passed away on Monday, January 17, 2022, at his residence. He was born on May 5, 1970, in Saigon, Vietnam to Hon Thi To and Dinh Doan.



Olivia Doan; five sisters, and four brothers.

The funeral service was held at St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church on Thursday, January 20, 2022. Carlos Lerma officiated. Burial was in the Mass at Mountain View Cemetery.

Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, VA is serving the Doan family.

Online condolences may be made at norrisfuneral.com.

Mr. Doan was a member of St. Joseph’s Catholic Church and was an owner/operator of Tina’s Nail Salon.

In addition to his parents, he is survived by his wife, Tina Doan; daughters, Cindy Doan, and



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Williams

from page 1

attack which set staff back by a week, Williams said, adding “they’re already on a very tight timeline, so I can just imagine what this particular drafter was having to deal with at that time.”

He said he appreciated the agency’s public statement and is not concerned about the story casting a shadow on his political career, at least on the part of fellow Republicans.

“The left has been trying to destroy me for a long time,” he said. “They don’t like the conservative values I adhere to and champion. Ultimately, they want to try and give me a black eye. Most people understand the mainstream media doesn’t present both sides.”

Williams noted that most of the national news outlets that picked up the story used it to create “clickbait” headlines. Though the outlets updated their stories after DLS issued its statement, the headlines remained the same.

Additionally, Williams said the national attention is not necessarily a negative.

“The silver lining is everyone knows exactly where my bill is, how it reads, and what it calls for. It brought national exposure to this important issue,” Williams said of House Bill (HB) 781.

The proposal, he said, “was model legislation for the elimination of critical race theory (CRT) from our schools. It expanded on no just critical race theory but other divisive concepts like anti-Semitic curriculum.”

Gov. Glenn Youngkin campaigned heavily on an education platform, Williams said, and added one of his initiatives was to ban CRT and other divisive concepts from Virginia’s classrooms.

“He’s already done that in his day one executive order,” Williams said, but noted such orders are “only as good as long as (they’re) upheld by the governor or a court of law. Ultimately, we need

legislation to pass this as well.”

Williams said his bill is intended to help accomplish that.

Another benefit of the spotlight has been the opportunity to receive input from supporters of the bill, many of them teachers, Williams said.

Since the error was first reported, Williams said he has received “quite a bit of communication” from supporters of the principle tenants of the bill, but teachers in particular expressed concern about some of its logistical elements, namely the requirement that schools list all instructional materials and activities and other related items for the upcoming school year by July 1.

“I’ve had many teachers reach out to tell me this particular part of the bill is not feasible,” Williams said. “This process is fluid,” he tells them, “and my bill is a jumping off point.” He knows there will be amendments to come.

“This is just a starting point, it’s not set in stone, and it certainly isn’t passed legislation at this point,” he said.

In fact, Williams said he anticipates “many amendments” to several similar bills introduced by other Republican legislators which, he believes, will result “in a desirable legislative package that will ban CRT in the schools and that Governor Youngkin will be able to sign and support.”

Williams said that his biggest lesson learned from this experience is, “don’t trust the swamp. Next time I will draft my own legislation and submit a hard copy instead of letting anybody else touch it.”

Ultimately, though, the freshman delegate is unfazed by recent events.

“It’s just a flash in the pan,” he said. “We’re already back to work and have our heads down, pushing through the legislation we want to get done this year.”

Legislation

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a “born alive infant protection act.” The proposal “creates an affirmative duty for doctors who deliver children to administer life-saving medical care” to those children.

A summary on the state’s Legislative Information System’s website (lis.virginia.gov) states the bill “requires every physician ... who attempts to terminate a pregnancy to ... exercise the same degree of professional skill, care, and diligence to preserve the life and health of a human infant who has been born alive following such attempt as a reasonably diligent and conscientious health care practitioner would render to any child born alive at the same gestational age.”

Under the bill as currently written, physicians who fail to comply would be guilty of a Class 4 felony.

While the fate of his proposals remains unknown at this point, Williams said his first week as a delegate in the General Assembly has been “pretty amazing.”

“This is a very, very historic place that’s steeped in tradition and procedure and as both a lover of Virginia history and a nerd for procedure and governmental interaction, it’s been absolutely a pleasure to get to serve this role for my community,” he said.

“I have learned a lot, I have met hundreds of people, I have been engaging with constituents that have been passionate about their bills. Lobbyists who have come to see me and other colleagues, other delegates

Delegate Wren M. Williams (R) - House District 9	
In-session address:	Mailing address:
Pocahontas Building 900 East Main Street Richmond, Virginia 23219 (804) 698-1009 email: delwilliams@house.virginia.gov	125 Slusher Street Stuart, Virginia 24171
Legislation as Chief Patron: (registered users: create report or csv file)	
HB 775 Religious freedom; applicability of certain executive orders.	
HB 776 Abortion; born alive human infant; treatment and care; penalty.	
HB 778 Relocation of monument and memorials.	
HB 779 Elections; photo identification required; time for in-person absentee.	
HB 780 Voter registration; registration permitted up to and including the day of the election.	
HB 781 Public elementary and secondary schools; student citizenship skills.	
HB 782 Nonsuits; appeals from judgment of a general district court.	
HB 811 Admission to bail; rebuttable presumptions against bail.	
HB 812 Admission to bail; rebuttable presumptions against bail.	
HB 813 Acquisition and use of military property by law-enforcement agencies.	
HB 1131 Virginia Code Commission; work group to review public notices required to be published.	
HB 1132 Payment of small amounts to certain persons without involvement of fiduciary; threshold.	
HJ 90 Commending Terry Tilley.	

On Jan. 18, Virginia’s Legislative Information System (LIS) website denotes bills that list Del. Wren Williams as their chief patron. Williams said that the Division of Legislative Services continues to process and number some proposed pieces of legislation, but that task is expected to be completed by the end of the week.

are signing on to my bills or asking me to support theirs—the whole process has just been surreal, amazing, and absolutely humbling during my first week here,” Williams said.

He shares part of that experience during Facebook videos titled, ‘Walks with Wren,’ that are recorded on his morning walks to work and intended to give people the ability to connect with the day-to-day activity in Richmond. Williams said

he plans to continue the videos, though perhaps not with the same frequency.

“Prior to my time as a delegate, I always felt we were a bit cut off from the information. It came to us through the news, it was sort of slow and we had to dig for it. I want to make it available and accessible to people back home” so they can see the process of governing, Williams said.

He thanked the voters who sent him to Richmond

as their representative, adding that he hopes to hear from his constituents.

“If you come to Richmond, feel free to reach out. We can set up Capitol tours, we can host you. Give us a call, set up a Zoom meeting—we’re very accessible and we’d love to hear from our home district while we’re here,” he said.

The General Assembly is scheduled to be in session until March 12.

Bassett posts quarterly dividend

Bassett Furniture Industries, Inc. (Nasdaq: BSET) announced today that its Board of Directors has declared a regular quarterly dividend of \$0.14 per share of common stock, payable on February 25, 2022, to shareholders of record at the close of business on February 11, 2022.

About Bassett Furniture Industries, Inc.

Bassett Furniture Industries, Inc. (NASDAQ:BSET), is a leading manufacturer and

marketer of high quality home furnishings. With 97 company- and licensee-owned stores at the time of this release, Bassett has leveraged its strong brand name in furniture into a network of corporate and licensed stores that focus on providing consumers with a friendly environment for buying furniture and accessories. Bassett’s retail strategy includes stylish, custom-built furniture that features the latest on-trend furniture styles, free in-home design visits, and coordinated decorating accessories. Bassett also has a traditional wholesale business with more than 700 accounts on the open market, across the United States and internationally and a logistics business specializing in home furnishings. For more information, visit the Company’s website at bassettfurniture.com. (BSET-E)

Honor

from page 1



Monday (standing, third from right) with other members of the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society Board of Directors, one of the many community organizations to which Monday lends his talents and expertise. Seated (from left): Mary Beth Noonan, Virginia King, and Joyce Staples. Standing (from left): Jarred Marlowe, Joshua Duncan, W.C. Fowlkes, Bob Tuggle, Johnathan Phillips, Monday, Mike Bass, and Zach Fleming.

its new fellows on Jan. 26.

McGavin said the foundation does several things but “overall, the first thing we do is recognize by invitation lawyers who are preeminent in the practice of law, who are leaders in the community, and leaders in the bar.”

The idea behind the honor, he said, stems from the “traditional view of a lawyer not only working hard and succeeding, but working hard to make his or her community better, and working hard to be a leader in his or her community, and that’s what we recognize.”

“It’s a high honor” to be recognized as a fellow, McGavin said, and one that “very few lawyers have,” but “there’s a responsibility that comes with it to be a leader and to continue on your good work” within the community.

McGavin said Monday and other fellows serve as ambassadors “for what’s right and just and proper,” in keeping with the spirit of the foundation, which makes

charitable grants each year to support its three areas of focus—the rule of law, access to justice, and legal education.

This year, he said the VLF will provide nearly \$700,000 in grants to help those in need with access to justice.

“If you’re sick or indigent or poor, or you lost your job and you need legal services, our funding is out into the community across the state of Virginia in various ways to try to help,” he said.

Monday, who has served as Martinsville’s city attorney since 2003, said he was both flattered and honored to be selected for the prestigious honor.

He said he grew up in a civic-minded household. Both of his parents, also attorneys, instilled the values of community service in him from an early age, a legacy Monday said he hopes he is passing on to his own son.

“Both of them were involved in the community, and they made it very clear to me that it was expected that if you were going into the legal profession, they felt it was also important to do things for your community,” Monday recalled. “I’ve always tried to get involved in things, and that continued after I began my legal career.”

Monday received his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Virginia (UVA.) During his time there, he worked as a research specialist in Virginia local government at the university’s Weldon Cooper Center for Public

Service. He served as a research specialist for the Governor’s Commission on Ethics and Government, and as a Governor’s Fellow in the office of Virginia’s Attorney General.

After receiving his law degree, Monday clerked for the Honorable Jackson Kiser, Chief U.S. District Judge for Western Virginia. He then worked as an associate attorney for Young, Haskins, Mann & Gregory.

He followed in his parents’ footsteps and opened his own Martinsville-based practice in 1998. Monday worked as the County Attorney for Patrick County from 2004-2008, and began working as Martinsville’s city attorney in 2003.

In addition to his academic and professional accomplishments, Monday has continued to engage with several nonprofit, civic, and other organizations in Martinsville, Henry County, and surrounding areas.

He has served on the board of directors for many organizations, including the Patrick County’s JEB Stuart Birthplace, the Patrick County Economic Development Authority, the SPCA of Martinsville-Henry County, the Virginia Local Government Attorneys Association, the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation, and the Henry County-Martinsville Social Services Board.

He is past president of the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, the Carlisle School Board of Trustees, and the Martinsville-Henry County Historical

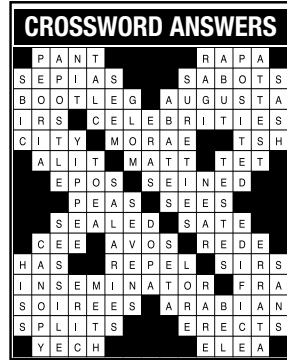
Society (where he still serves on the board.) He previously served as chairman of deacons at Starling Avenue Baptist Church in Martinsville, and chairman of the Henry County-Martinsville Social Services Board.

Currently, Monday sits on the Board of Governors at Chatmoss Country Club, is the Southside Virginia representative on the Board of Governors for the Virginia Bar Association, the state chancellor for the Virginia Society Sons of the American Revolution, and is on the Virginia Commission for the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution.

“I think it’s important to do that,” Monday said of his community activities. “Martinsville and Henry County have been really good to me, and I think it’s important to give back to the community.”

The city’s mayor, Kathy Lawson, said, “we are very fortunate in Martinsville to have Eric Monday as council’s attorney, but he rises above and does so much for others in the community.”

“Whether it’s researching for an organization, providing assistance for legal matters, to being a kindred soul helping someone through a challenging time, Eric does so unselfishly,” Lawson said. “I have found him to be a wealth of knowledge and willing to share his experience and expertise. He is a true professional and a loving husband and father. We are blessed to have him in our community and our city.”



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Reversion from page 1



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A Henry County Sheriff's Deputy delivers a letter from the county to City Manager Leon Towarnicki. The letter requests that city council join with the Henry County Board of Supervisors in a joint resolution to support legislation introduced by Del. Danny Marshall and Sen. Bill Stanley requiring a referendum within Martinsville on reversion. Mayor Kathy Lawson called the delivery a "staged photo-op."

Martinsville—from being able to do it. This legislation is another last-minute attempt to do the same.

"Given Henry County's abandonment of a Voluntary Settlement Agreement they supposedly negotiated in good faith with us, we are understandably reluctant to take their current 'invitation' at anything like face value" Lawson wrote in the prepared statement. "Let's not pretend this is an olive branch—kindly delivered by a county deputy, in a staged photo-op. It's a baseball bat, and the county is trying to use it to kill reversion, pure and simple."

A filing from Martinsville previously was delivered to Henry County officials via a Martinsville Sheriff's Deputy.

She noted that the city has taken all steps for reversion currently required by Virginia law, but now "some people have decided they can get Richmond to change the law at the last minute to prevent reversion, and apply that new law only to Martinsville and no other locality in the state."

Lawson dubbed the action "bad politics" and "even worse public policy. A referendum has never been part of the reversion process since it was originally put in place in the 1980s," according to her statement.

"Henry County wants new rules, for Martinsville only. This is no different than someone trying to change the rules of a game, while the game is underway, when it doesn't go their way," she said, and added that the city believes Virginia should "stay the course, with the laws that have been in place for every locality across the state for almost forty years."

Marshall said that Martinsville is mentioned by name in his bill because it is the only locality currently confronting reversion.

However, he said that "Mayor Lawson might have a good idea—it's a good idea for Martinsville, maybe it's a good idea for the whole state ... to make it part of the process that the citizens would have a say in such a major change in policy."

Lawson expressed concern about wording in both bills that seemed to indicate that "these bills require a majority of all qualified voters, not a majority of the people who actually choose to vote" to pass the referendum.

Stanley said that this was an error in writing the language of the bill and he was requesting an amendment to change the proposal to reflect that the issue would be decided by a simple majority of those who voted on the issue.

"We are certain to discuss this matter at council's next meeting on January 25th," Lawson's prepared statement concluded.

"Ultimately," Stanley said, "I think it is the people that live in the city of Martinsville that should decide their own fate."

Stanley said he recently learned that in 2006, city council passed a resolution stating that, if the city ever decided to revert, it would appear as a referendum on the ballot for voters to let their voices be heard.

He said that he decided to introduce the legislation after watching the dissatisfaction expressed during the CLG's public hearings on reversion and after speaking to several faith-based and civic leaders in the community who, he said, voiced opposition.

"From that, it seemed to me that the people of Martinsville should have a say in whether Martinsville stops being a great city and becomes a town," Stanley said.

"It's a fairness issue for me," Marshall said, and noted recent major decisions in nearby localities that all included a voter referendum, including a recent 1 percent sales tax hike to support new school construction, which he said voters supported in many localities.

Marshall also noted that several years ago, Danville held a referendum on bringing a casino into the city.

"When you get a large issue like that," he said, "I think it's only fair to ask the citizens what their thoughts are."

Marshall added that he, like Stanley, had heard from city residents regarding reversion, some who spoke out against it and some who supported it.

"The easiest way to do this is just put it to the voters," he said.

Marshall previously introduced similar legislation which, he said, "made it out of the House but died in the Senate." He said he feels confident his bill would once again find support in the House, "then we'll see about the Senate."

Stanley said he had several concerns about Martinsville's reversion, including the fate of Martinsville High School which he called a "great asset."

He said he didn't want the school's rich history to be forgotten, particularly the success of its athletic program which won state championships and created opportunities for some athletes to compete at higher levels and earn college scholarships.

"Our children are our greatest natural resource, especially for our future," Stanley said. "Not having that important part of our history be a part of their future is just a ter-

rible thing."

Additionally, Stanley said, reversion would create a "double tax" on Martinsville residents, who he said would pay both town and county taxes.

"That bothers me," Stanley said.

City Attorney and Assistant City Manager Eric Monday has said that while Martinsville residents would receive two tax bills, "that doesn't mean your taxes are doubled, it just means you get two bills." He said that one of the reasons city officials pursued reversion was to prevent increasing the tax burden on its residents.

Stanley expressed concern, too, about Martinsville losing its designation as a city.

"Virginia doesn't make cities anymore," he said. "If we revert, there's no way we're going to be a city again."

He recalled previous vacations to Martinsville "because it was the place to be." Though he acknowledged that the city is in an "economic rut" caused by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), he thinks the city is "working slowly and surely to revitalize our economy. We are a great city and I think we will be great again."

Though the CLG found that the city's reversion was in the best interest of the state, the city, and the county, Stanley said that the commission "does not live within the confines of Martinsville" and balked at the idea of "other people determining the fate" of the city which, he said, should be decided by the people "who have worked so hard" to build Martinsville.

"A vote is the greatest power a citizen has to craft the direction of its municipality," Stanley said, "and I want to give them that opportunity. That's why I'm doing this, that's why I'm passionate about it."

Marshall's bill was assigned to a subcommittee within the Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns on Jan. 18. Marshall said he did not know when the proposal would be discussed.

Stanley's bill will be taken up by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections on Tuesday, Jan. 25. The committee convenes 15 minutes after adjournment, he said, adding that residents are invited to sign up to speak electronically either for or against the legislation.

Information on participating in the live-streamed session can be found by clicking "Senate Committee Live Video Streaming" under the Committees tab at virginiageneralassembly.gov.

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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 **February 9, 2022 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 **February 22, 2022 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-22-03 Wayne A. Willard / Twin Oak Properties, LLC
The property is located in front of 51 Sandy River Road in the Iriswood District. The Tax Map number is 56.1/8D. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 1.05-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Commercial District B-1. The applicant intends to develop commercial self-storage units on the property.

The applications 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

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Virginia announces \$11 million in grant funds available

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation will hold an open grant round for \$11 million in federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State and Local Assistance grants from Feb. 1 – March 15.

An informational session and application workshop will be held Feb. 9 at 10 a.m. Register for the workshop at www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Eligible LWCF projects include acquisition, development, combination of acquisition and development, or rehabilitation of parks and other outdoor recreation areas.

Eligible applicants include state agencies, local units of government (state political subdivisions such as cities, counties and park authorities) and federally or state-recognized Indian tribes.

The LWCF is a 50-50 percent matching reimbursement program. Grantees must be able to fund 100 percent of their project while seeking periodic reimbursements. The

minimum grant award in this round will be \$250,000, with a minimum total project cost of \$500,000. The maximum grant award is \$2 million.

An updated program manual, application materials, and applicant resources will be posted to www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf by Feb. 1.

Applications will be due via email no later than March 15 at 4 p.m.

For more information, contact the DCR Recreation Grants Team via email at recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 established a federal reimbursement program for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas. In Virginia, the program is administered by DCR on behalf of the National Park Service. The program represents a federal, state and local partnership. A key feature of the program is that all LWCF-assisted areas must be maintained and opened, in perpetuity, as public outdoor recreation areas. This requirement ensures their use for future generations.



An Annual Census To Collect Data On The Needs Of People Experiencing Homelessness In Our Community

The Point In Time Count (PIT) is an annual census of the homeless population in the counties of Patrick, Franklin, Henry, Pittsylvania and the cities of Danville and Martinsville. Near the end of January, volunteers will head out early in the morning to count every person experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Volunteers count people in cars, tents, parks, under bridges, and on the streets. The information from this count is used to guide public policy and secure resources to help end homelessness in our community.



West Piedmont Better Housing Coalition 2022 PIT Count scheduled for January 26th

How you can help

On the night of the PIT Count we need **adult** volunteers to help canvas the West Piedmont service area, as well as volunteers to help staff the PIT Count Headquarters. For more information on the PIT Count and how you can help, please contact us at www.westpiedmontcontinuum.com/contact

Leading up to the PIT Count we need volunteers to help us collect and package donations to hand out. We want to provide a token of gratitude to those who take the time to talk with us. Our goal is to collect enough donations for 200 people. **Anyone can help collect donations.**

Volunteers Needed

Contact Felecia Watkins at 540-483-5142 ext. 3063

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