

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, February 19, 2022

(USPS-6)

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PHOTO BY CULLAN SMITH

Burn ban now in effect

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) and fire departments throughout Virginia issued a reminder about the 4 p.m. burn ban, which began on February 15. The law prohibits burning before 4 p.m. if the fire is in or within 300 feet of woodlands, brush, or fields with dry grass and other flammable materials.

Although Virginia also has a wildfire season in the fall, more than 60 percent of the Commonwealth's annual average of 700 wildfires happen in the spring - especially in March and April.

Many areas have had a lot of moisture recently, but Virginia is still recovering from a significant deficit last year. Sunny days with brisk winds can easily dry out fuels, such as storm-downed limbs, increasing the potential for wildfires.

Even though burning is allowed from 4 p.m. to midnight, the Virginia Department of Forestry says you should be cau-

tious of weather conditions and winds.

"The 4 PM Burning Law is one of the most important tools we have in the prevention of wildfires in Virginia," said John Miller, VDOF's director of fire and emergency response. "The number one cause of wildfires in the Commonwealth is people burning yard debris and/or trash, and the 4 PM Burning Law goes a long way toward reducing the risk associated with wildfires each year."

Violation of the burn law is a Class 3 misdemeanor and is punishable with a fine of up to \$500. Forestry officials say those who allow a fire to "escape" are liable for the cost of suppressing the blaze and any property damage it causes.

Regardless of the time of day or time of year, it is critical to exercise sound judgment when burning. Even if it is

See **Burn Ban**, page 3



Martinsville Speedway President Clay Campbell discusses some of his favorite moments and memories of the Martinsville Speedway, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. The raceway is the oldest active track in NASCAR.

Martinsville Speedway celebrates 75 years, remains a work in progress

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Martinsville Speedway, NASCAR's oldest active track, is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year.

Though the team has yet to announce any formal plans for celebration, Martinsville Speedway President Clay Campbell said, "we've got a lot of things planned all year long," and celebrations are not just scheduled around race weekends.

Beginning sometime in the next couple of weeks, there will be "something every week throughout the year, different memories, differ-

ent milestones, different significant points in time throughout our history. We're going to have fun with it," Campbell said.

Martinsville Speedway was founded in 1947 by Campbell's grandfather, H. Clay Earles. The first race was held on the original dirt track on Sept. 7, 1947, three months before the creation of NASCAR. More than 9,000 fans attended.

The local facility is the only NASCAR track to host NASCAR Cup Series races every year since its inception in 1949.

In 1964, the track

See **NASCAR**, page 2

Senate approves bill on reversion referendum

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

The effort by two members of the General Assembly to enact legislation requiring a voter referendum on reversion in Martinsville easily passed another hurdle last week.

State Sen. Bill Stanley's proposal, SB 85, was approved by the Senate in a 32-8 vote.

Del. Danny Marshall, R-Danville, sponsored a companion bill in the House which was approved 82-18 on Feb. 4.

"It's not for the government to decide the fate of this great city," Stanley said, speaking on the Senate floor. "Let the people decide. It is their right in a free and democratic society."

Sen. Joe Morrissey, D-Richmond, joined Stanley, R-Moneta, in support of the bill. Sens. Creigh Deeds, D-Charlottesville, and Jeremy McPike, D-Woodbridge, both spoke against the measure.

McPike, who sits on the Local Government Committee and previously voted against the bill, asked why Stanley sought a ref-

See **Reversion**, page 5



THE SENATE OF VIRGINIA
S.B. 85. (Stanley)
Martinsville, City of; approval of voters before
city can revert to town status, sun... pg 9

YEAS: 32 NAYS: 8 R36: 0

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|
| YEA | Barker | NAY | Favala | NAY | Mason | YEA | Pillon |
| YEA | Bell | YEA | Hackworth | YEA | McClellan | YEA | Reeves |
| YEA | Boyske | YEA | Hanger | YEA | McDougle | YEA | Ruff |
| YEA | Chase | NAY | Hashmi | NAY | McPike | YEA | Seslaw |
| YEA | Congrove | NAY | Howell | YEA | Morrissey | YEA | Sprull |
| NAY | Deeds | YEA | Kiggans | YEA | Norman | YEA | Stuart |
| YEA | DeSteph | NAY | Lewis | YEA | Normant | YEA | Stutterlein |
| YEA | Domeneant | YEA | Locke | YEA | Obenshain | YEA | Surrevell |
| NAY | Ehlin | YEA | Lucas | YEA | Peake | YEA | Surrevell |
| YEA | Edwards | YEA | Marden | YEA | Peterson | YEA | Vogel |

State Sen. Bill Stanley speaks on the Senate floor in support of his bill calling for a voter referendum on reversion in Martinsville. The Senate approved Stanley's bill in a 32-8 vote. It will now face another vote in the House, which has already approved a companion bill by Del. Danny Marshall 82-18.

Construction and modernization bills seek to address aging school buildings

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Last week, the Virginia Senate passed the final three bills in a five-bill package that, if approved by the House, provides pathways

for additional funding for school construction, including Martinsville and Henry County schools. Two of the bills were passed by the Senate in January.

The bipartisan legislative package was recommended by

the Commission on School Construction and Modernization, which reported that more than half of K-12 school buildings in Virginia are more than 50-years-old. It estimated the amount of funding needed to replace these aging buildings is \$24.8 billion. Many localities face significant challenges raising sufficient funds to undertake these projects.

State Sen. Bill Stanley, R-Moneta, is a member of the commission.

"From the very beginning, (commission chairman) Sen. (Jennifer) McClellan (D-Richmond) and I have fought together for the modernization of our public school buildings because we believe that a modern school is one of the essential ingredients needed to provide a world class education for our children throughout the Commonwealth," Stanley said in a press release on the package.

"We both firmly believe that our children are our Commonwealth's

See **Construction**, page 6



At 54 years old, Martinsville High School, opened in 1968, is the city's newest school building, said Travis Clemons, executive director of administrative services for Martinsville City Public Schools. All of the city's school buildings and most of those in the county could stand to benefit from legislation passed by the Virginia Senate targeting school construction and modernization.

First class of firefighters are ready for service

Callie Hietala
Staff writer



The first class of the Blue Ridge Fire & EMS Academy heads toward the Henry County Burn Building Training Facility to complete the live burn portion of their Firefighter 1 state test. The firefighters took on three scenarios, according to Assistant Chief of Training Kenny Shumate: a basement fire, a ground-level fire, and a second story fire.

One by one, students in the first class of the Blue Ridge Fire & EMS Academy filed into a burning building, hoses and tools in hand, battling first one blaze, then another and another, to complete the live burn portion of their Firefighter 1 state test.

The fires were artificially created in a building constructed to withstand the flames. The Henry

See **Firefighters**, page 8

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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, Feb. 19

In conjunction with the National African American Read-In, Piedmont Arts (215 Starling Avenue, Martinsville) invites the community to take part in a celebration of African American artists, performers, and writers. Community members will read excerpts from books, stories, and poems by their favorite African American authors and a selection of books will be on display. All ages are welcome. The read-in takes place from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The Martinsville YMCA and Miles in Martinsville is bringing back its popular Nail the Rail 9-Miler and Run the Rail 5-Miler for 2022. Runners have the chance to run their choice of 9 or 5 miles beginning at milepost 0 of the Dick & Willie Trail. For more information or to register, visit milesinmartinsville.com.

The Spencer-Penn Centre (475 Spencer-Penn Road, Spencer) is hosting a charcuterie class. Charcuterie boards are all the rage. Learn how to create your own and wow your friends at your next get-together. All supplies will be provided. Cost is \$25 and participants must pre-register by calling (276) 957-5757.

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.

Monday, Feb. 21

The American Red Cross is hosting a blood drive at the Collinsville Church of Christ (2115 Daniels Creek Road, Collinsville) from 1-6 p.m. To schedule an appointment, visit redcrossblood.org.

Tuesday, Feb. 22

The Henry County School Board and the Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold a joint budget work session beginning at 5 p.m. in the 4th floor conference room of the Henry County Administration Building, located at 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.

Wednesday, Feb. 23

The West Piedmont Health District will provide free, drive-through 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. No registration is required and there is no age limit for testing. Participants must wear a mask and no pets are allowed in vehicles.

Thursday, Feb. 24

Longwood University presents a Zoom workshop, Building the Foundation for Your New Business with business analyst Michael Scales. Participants will prepare to start a successful business by evaluating their entrepreneurial abilities, learning about marketing strategies and financial resources, and gaining tips on preparing a business plan. This virtual workshop will take place from 10-11:30 a.m. To register, visit clients.virginiasbdc.org/events.

Thursday, March 3

The Henry County School Board will hold its regular meeting beginning at 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the Henry County Administration Building, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.

P&HCC is offering a hyflex (in-person or virtual) professional development workshop, “Customer Service: Rev Up Your Engines” from 9-11 a.m. This workshop focuses on ensuring guests have the best possible experience at hotels or restaurants. 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, March 4-6

P&HCC is offering a motorcycle basic rider course. This 3-day course is for those who want to learn to ride a motorcycle properly and safely. Motorcycles and helmets are provided for your use during the course. Sessions meet Friday from 6-9:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. The cost of the class is \$100. Pre-registration is required. Call (276) 656-5461 or visit ph.augusoft.net.

Saturday, March 5

Piedmont Arts presents its annual, fabulous fundraiser Dancing for the Arts, beginning at 4 p.m. in the Martinsville High School Auditorium. The contest features 8 teams competing to win the most votes, the highest score from the judges, and a set of hand-crafted trophies. The cost is \$10 for general admission and \$25 for reserved seating. Purchase tickets at piedmontarts.org.

Thursday, March 10

Piedmont Arts (215 Starling Avenue,

Martinsville) is celebrating Art at Happy Hour. Enjoy complimentary drinks and light snacks provided by the Piedmont Arts Guild while you go on a casual, self-guided tour of current exhibits. RSVP by March 9 to (276) 632-3221 or online at piedmontarts.org.

Friday, March 11

It's Music Night at the Spencer Penn Centre. Enjoy tunes from the Jus Cauz Bluegrass Band in the Centre's Alumni Hall (475 Spencer-Penn Road, Spencer.) Gate opens at 5 p.m. and the band goes on at 6:15. Admission is a \$5 donation. Social distancing is required, and masks when distancing is not possible. Concessions will be sold.

Thursday, March 17

The Henry County School Board will hold a special meeting beginning at 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the Henry County Administration Building, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.

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.

ONGOING

The Lousie R. Lester Spay/Neuter Clinic is hosting wellness clinics every Tuesday beginning Feb. 1. Clinics are by appointment only—walk-ins are not accepted. February's clinics will be dedicated to families with public assistance only, but will open to everyone beginning in March. Call (276) 638-7297 to schedule your appointment.

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 suc-

cesses 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 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 digital literacy, job skills, English language skills, and earning potential. Call (276) 647-9585.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Remain as is
 - 5. Functional
 - 11. News magazine
 - 12. Popular treat
 - 16. Area units
 - 17. Artificial intelligence
 - 18. Marten valued for its fur
 - 19. Forms of matter
 - 24. Home of the Dodgers
 - 25. Bordering
 - 26. Part of the eye
 - 27. It might be nervous
 - 28. Visualizes
 - 29. Crest of a hill
 - 30. Measures engine speed (abbr.)
 - 31. Tears in a garment (Br. Eng.)
 - 33. Not easily explained
 - 34. Song in short stanzas
 - 38. Detonations
 - 39. Intestinal
 - 40. EU cofounder Paul-Henri _
 - 43. Balmy
 - 44. New Mexico mountain town
 - 45. Gobblers
 - 49. Insecticide
 - 50. Golf scores
 - 51. Has its own altar
 - 53. "Pollock" actor Harris
 - 54. Being livable
 - 56. NHL play-by-play man
 - 58. "The Great Lakes State" (abbr.)
 - 59. Unpainted
 - 60. Swam underwater
 - 63. Native American people
 - 64. Containing salt
 - 65. Exam
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Small bone in middle ear
 - 2. Long, angry speech
 - 3. Move out of
 - 4. Male organ
 - 5. Two-toed sloth
 - 6. Making dirty
 - 7. Article
 - 8. Oil company
 - 9. Emits coherent radiation
 - 10. Amounts of time
 - 13. Unit equal to one quintillion bytes (abbr.)
 - 14. Forbidden by law
 - 15. Drains away
 - 20. Not out
 - 21. Sea patrol (abbr.)
 - 22. Bird genus
 - 23. Gratuity
 - 27. _ and feathers
 - 29. Spiritual part of an individual (ancient Egypt)
 - 30. Hot beverage
 - 31. Pouch
 - 32. It followed the cassette
 - 33. Large northern deer
 - 34. Ones who offer formally
 - 35. Famed genie
 - 36. Bequeathed
 - 37. Skeletal muscle
 - 38. Atomic #56
 - 40. Silk garment
 - 41. They deliver the mail
 - 42. Equally
 - 44. Check
 - 45. Light-colored breed of hound
 - 46. Drug that soothes
 - 47. Railroads
 - 48. Most slick
 - 50. Jacket
 - 51. A radio band
 - 52. Hello
 - 54. His and _
 - 55. Supporter
 - 57. Popular software suite (abbr.)
 - 61. Railway
 - 62. NY coastal region (abbr.)

NASCAR

from page 1

introduced its iconic Martinsville grandfather clock trophy for race winners. The clocks, manufactured by Ridgeway Clocks, are still awarded today.

One significant acknowledgment of the track's milestone anniversary will open on race week in April at the NASCAR Hall of Fame in Charlotte, N.C. The museum is creating an exhibit centered on the Speedway, which will be up for the rest of 2022.

The exhibit marks the first-ever display honoring a track's historic anniversary, as well as its impact and contributions in the history of NASCAR.

"I think it speaks volumes for what the Martinsville Speedway has done for the sport of NASCAR," Campbell said of the exhibit.

Campbell said he recently got to go through the archives, looking at photos, programs, memorabilia, and even trophies from the track's long history, rediscovering moments and memories he had forgotten.

"The history and the moments in time that really mean something are abundant," Campbell

said. "There's been so many signature moments since the speedway was built. Great finishes, great races, personalities."

He happened on a picture of a race day years ago when actress Elizabeth Taylor visited the speedway with Sen. John Warner, Taylor's sixth husband. She was only meant to make a brief appearance, Campbell recalled, but ended up staying the entire day.

Campbell said race fans are already getting into the spirit of the anniversary celebrations, recognizing the significance of something that has been in the sport for so long.

"If you look at Martinsville Speedway, and especially the fans when they go in the gates, they feel the history, the heritage, the tradition, and feel all the greats who have been there before," he said.

Campbell himself is part of that tradition, carrying on his grandfather's legacy in racing. He joined the speedway in 1978 and became track president in 1988. He is now the longest-serving track president in NASCAR.

"I grew up at the speedway," Campbell said. "It

really was my home away from home."

Though the track has been around for three quarters of a century, Campbell said it has always been and continues to be a work in progress.

"Every year we're doing something," he said, "pressing forward and growing with the times."

Though some things may have changed, others remain the same. The original dirt track was paved in 1955 and in 2017 the speedway became the first major racing facility in the nation to install LED lights, but the .526-mile track with its iconic paperclip shape remains the shortest on the Cup Series schedule.

Ultimately though, Campbell returns to the race fans who flock to the speedway on race weekends and whose support, he said, is crucial to the speedway's continued success.

"Fans are the reason the track is still here after 75 years," he said.

"I think (they) appreciate how we look back," Campbell said, "respect tradition while at the same time moving forward into the modern era."

Hollins University announces Dean's List for Fall 2021

Students who earned Dean's List honors during the fall 2021 semester at Hollins University are:

- Lidia Soto Minter, of Martinsville;
 - Naomi Hairston, of Bassett;
 - Shyanne Helms, of Bassett.
- To attain this distinction, students must earn at least a 3.5 average on a 4.0 grading scale.

Hollins is an independent liberal arts university offering undergraduate education to women, selected graduate programs for men and women, and community outreach initiatives. Founded in 1842 as Virginia's first chartered women's college, its distinctions include a nationally ranked creative writing program, one of the oldest study abroad programs in the country, and extensive internship opportunities.

RU releases winter 2021 graduates, Dean's List for Fall 2021

Radford University conferred 594 undergraduate and graduate degrees during the 2021 winter commencement exercises.

On Dec. 11, 2021, 461 graduate and undergraduate degrees were awarded at the Dedmon Center on main campus in Radford, and 133 degrees were presented at Radford University Carilion events in Roanoke.

Alumnus Brian Robinson '93 delivered the keynote address. Robinson is Goldman Sachs's head of prime brokerage sales for the Americas. "As you embark on your journey, know there's going to be potholes, peaks, valleys, ups, downs, whatever. But put some soul into it. Put your soul into it," Robinson said. "I promise you today, if you rise and grind, a magic carpet ride awaits you. Greatness is upon you."

Among those receiving diplomas were:

Austin Ray Witcher, of Martinsville, Bachelor of Science in Allied Health Sciences;

Caleb Elijah Belcher, of Collinsville, Bachelor of Science in Exercise, Sport, and Health Education;

Nathaniel D Cardarelli, of Bassett, Bachelor of Science in Media Studies;

Chaney Gordon, of Collinsville, Bachelor of Science in Nursing in Nursing;

Stormie Gail Dula, of Martinsville, Master of Occupational Therapy in Occupational Therapy;

Erin Nicole Lanigan, of Martinville, Master of Occupational Therapy in Occupational Therapy;

Terrance Jaron Schoefield, of Martinsville, Master of Science in Strategic Communication.

RU also released its Dean's List for Fall 2021.

Appearing on the Dean's List is the most prestigious academic recognition Radford University students can receive for their performance during a semester.

Students will be placed on the Dean's List if they meet four specific criteria. They must have 12 semester hours of coursework graded A-F; earn GPAs of at least 3.4 for all courses not graded on a pass-fail basis; obtain no grade lower than "C"; and no incomplete grades.

The following students were included on the Fall 2021 Dean's List:

- Kevin Garibay, Accounting major from Martinsville;
- Tonita Parks, Art major from Martinsville;
- Hunter Greer, Biology major from Axton;
- Charlie Koger, Biology major from Bassett;
- Jaquan Perkins, Communication major from Ridgeway;
- Kelcie Lemons, Comm Sciences & Disorders major from Ridgeway;
- Victoria Dean, Criminal Justice major

- from Collinsville;
- Erica Gilley, English major from Bassett;
- Lauren Handy, Exercise, Sport, & Health Educ major from Ridgeway;
- Noah Inman, Exercise, Sport, & Health Educ major from Collinsville;
- Emily Westmoreland, Exercise, Sport, & Health Educ major from Martinsville;
- Naomi Manns, Foreign Languages major from Spencer;
- Taylor Hill, Healthcare Administration major from Martinsville;
- Kevin Witcher, Healthcare Administration major from Martinsville;
- Sophia Mansour-Bruderer, Health Sciences major from Martinsville;
- Dakota Moore, Health Sciences major from Bassett;
- Mackenzie Edmonds, Interdisciplinary Studies major from Martinsville;
- Kristin Martin, Interdisciplinary Studies major from Martinsville;
- Kaitlin Keene, Medical Laboratory Science major from Martinsville;
- Dorien Harper, Management major from Martinsville;
- James Franklin, Marketing major from Collinsville;
- Shenika Bowles, Nursing major from Martinsville;
- Shania Deshazo, Nursing major from Martinsville;
- Chaney Gordon, Nursing major from Collinsville;
- Jasmine Hayzlett, Nursing major from Martinsville;
- Maranda Johns, Occupational Therapy Assistant major from Martinsville;
- Pierson Turner, Pre-Nursing major from Axton;
- Shyheim Woods, Psychology major from Bassett;
- Katania Stockton, Recreation, Parks, & Tourism major from Martinsville;
- Jayana Fuller, Respiratory Therapy major from Collinsville;
- Kelcea Taylor, Social Work major from Collinsville;
- Davis Byrd, Undergraduate Spec. Non-Degree major from Martinsville.

Radford University is a comprehensive public university of 8,998 students that has received national recognition for many of its undergraduate and graduate academic programs, as well as its sustainability initiatives. Well known for its strong faculty/student bonds, innovative use of technology in the learning environment and vibrant student life on a beautiful 211-acre American classical campus, Radford University offers students many opportunities to get involved and succeed in and out of the classroom.

Martinsville observes President's Day

In observance of President's Day, the City Municipal Building and administrative offices along with constitutional offices will be closed Monday, February 21.

Employees in essential operational positions (Police, Fire, EMS, water/sewer plant operations) will continue on their normal schedule. There will be no bulk or brush pickup on Monday, February 21. Regular operations will resume on Tuesday, February 22.

Sixth graders create 'sweet treats' for those in nursing facilities



Sixth grade students and teachers at Martinsville Middle School created cards to celebrate Valentine's Day for those in area nursing facilities.

With Valentine's Day in the month of February, some may find themselves asking, "where is the love?" Sixth graders and teachers at Martinsville Middle School found that answer through gifting nursing facilities around the area Valentine's cards for each of their patients.

"With times being as hard as they are and the limitations due to COVID, the last thing we want is for our elderly to feel as though they aren't being thought of or loved," said sixth grade English teacher and AVID Coordinator Morgan Belton.

Over an icy weekend, Martinsville Middle School's sixth grade English teacher Ashley Cassidy found the idea on Facebook and knew it was something that needed to be done. Reaching out to her colleagues, the group made it their mission to recruit others and accomplish the idea of showing love. Students were then giving the task to create

cards including little notes or Valentine's Day jokes inside.

"Once the students were presented the idea, they simply took off," said Belton.

One student, Abigail Campbell, said that everyone should be happy during the holiday. "Old people make me happy, and I know some do not have anyone and so maybe this will make them happy."

Rebecca Vernon, sixth grade Math teacher, said that her students were more than willing to create the cards and wanted to create multiple cards.

"We want our students to learn about kindness and how to be and show compassion towards others," said Vernon. "This isn't the only mission of kindness and compassion that the 6th graders at Martinsville Middle School will be conquering. They are looking to find opportunities each month to show these traits and up next is project Butterfly Hugs."



A sampling of the cards made by sixth grade students and teachers at Martinsville Middle School.

Burn Ban

from page 1

legal to burn, it might not be wise to do so. This is especially true if it has not rained in several days, the winds are high, or if you do not have the tools and equipment to contain or control a fire.

For more information on what you can

do to protect yourself and your property, how to become "firewise," or to get a complete copy of the Forest Fire Laws, contact your local VDOF office or visit <http://dof.virginia.gov/laws/index.htm#FireLaws>.



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OPINION

Fahrenheit 450-Dumb

A couple of weeks ago, our new Governor Glenn Youngkin launched a tip line to allow parents to report any “divisive” subjects being taught in Virginia schools — particularly Critical Race Theory (CRT).

As I’ve mentioned in this space before, CRT isn’t being taught in any Virginia schools. In fact, it isn’t being taught in any schools anywhere, at least not K-12. The only place you’re likely to encounter it is if you’re taking college-level legal studies.

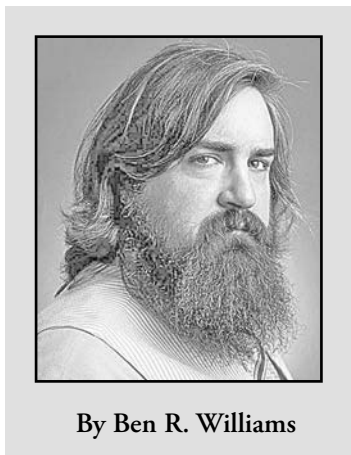
As an aside, the basic premise of CRT is that racism is so deeply engrained in our society that an attack on racism is perceived as an attack on society itself. Ironically, Youngkin’s crackdown on the very specter of CRT proves the truth of CRT.

Oh, but Youngkin isn’t the only politician going all-in on the CRT boogeyman. Around this same time, Iowa state Rep. Norlin Mommsen (wasn’t that the name of Steve Martin’s character in “The Jerk?”) introduced

a bill to place cameras in Iowa K-12 schools, allowing parents to remotely monitor teachers to make sure they don’t teach “sinister plots.” I assume this means teaching students that many slave owners were actually quite nice and the Tulsa race massacre was merely a collective hallucination.

While I can’t speak to Norlin Mommsen, I don’t think that Glenn Youngkin actually believes that CRT is being taught in Virginia schools. He’s a smart man. I think he’s just fulfilling a campaign promise that helped win him the election, which, to be clear, doesn’t absolve him and actually makes this situation much more horrifying. But Youngkin ran on the idea that parents should dictate what their children are taught, while his opponent Terry McAuliffe said parents shouldn’t be telling their school districts what to teach.

McAuliffe was absolutely right, but he probably regrets doubling down on that one.



By Ben R. Williams

It may well have cost him the election.

Parents shouldn’t dictate what their children are taught any more than I should dictate the way a plumber fixes my pipes. I brought in a professional to do something I don’t know how to do myself; who am I to tell him how to do his job?

But if this madness continues, parents may soon find themselves dictating the way their children are taught. They may be forced to homeschool their children; I don’t know where else they expect to find

teachers willing to put up with this garbage.

I know teachers. I’ve covered school board meetings. Believe me when I say that teachers are criminally underpaid. Virginia, in fact, is ranked as one of the worst places in the U.S. when it comes to salaries for teachers.

The average pay for a teacher in Virginia is about \$54,000. That’s the average, mind you, so in many parts of the Commonwealth the pay is significantly lower, while it’s higher in areas like northern Virginia where the cost of living is more expensive.

That may sound like a decent chunk of money, but teaching isn’t a 40 hour a week gig; it’s more like a 50-60 hour a week gig, and you don’t get paid overtime. And you’re probably also buying supplies out of your own pocket because your school district isn’t exactly overflowing with pencil money.

In order to get a teaching license in Virginia, you’re required to have a bachelor’s degree. If you have a bachelor’s degree in the present economy, you can probably make more

money doing something else. In some areas, you might even make more money working at Starbucks, and at least there you can get benefits while working part-time.

All of this is to say that the main reason someone would want to go into teaching is because they have a passion for it. Politicians like Youngkin and Mommsen seem hell-bent on grinding that passion under their boot heels like a bug.

Who wants to teach knowing that every single day, something you say might be misconstrued and reported to the state? Who wants to teach knowing that every second you’re going through your lesson plan, an anonymous group of parents are watching your every word, just waiting for you to slip up?

You couldn’t pay me enough. The horrible irony of this situation is that it does indeed prove that our educational system isn’t perfect. If it were, the people advocating for banning CRT and monitoring teachers would have learned how to think critically and done something constructive with their lives.

Weekly Update

Del. Les R. Adams
16th House District

The Virginia General Assembly has reached its midpoint for the 2022 regular session. By the time this column is published, bills that may possibly become law will have passed from the floor of either the House of Delegates or the Senate. Over the next few weeks, these bills will be considered by the opposite chamber where they were initially filed, beginning a new series of work by the committees.

Most of the bills I introduced have passed the House of Delegates, either as filed or in amended form. Several of

those addressed important public safety concerns that have been brought to the forefront in recent months. These bills are a representative sample of our efforts in the Republican majority to redress the damage done to our system by Governor Northam and the previous Democratic majority. What follows below are summary descriptions of the criminal justice measures I carried that have passed the House.

House Bill 756, as amended, requires magistrates to transmit bail determination forms to the appropriate Commonwealth’s Attorney within 24 hours following a bail hearing for crimes of violence.

House Bill 758 makes

certain changes to code sections governing the imposition of suspended sentences and modifications or revocation of sentences in criminal cases. While retaining the limitations on judges the General Assembly imposed last term whereby numerous probationary rule violations were classified as “technical violations” and outside a court’s authority to address at the first or second hearings, it removes from that list certain serious offenses like absconding and distribution of controlled substances.

House Bill 760 amends the law governing the authority a court has with respect to violations of probation when the violation involves the use, possession, or distribution of a Schedule I or Schedule II controlled substance, such as Cocaine or

Fentanyl. Specifically, this bill will exempt these behaviors from the list of so-called “technical violations” of probation, as described above, and thereby allow a court to immediately address such felonious conduct at a probation violation hearing.

House Bill 1318, which came on the recommendation of the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission on which I serve outside of session, to specify in the code that it is authorized to develop, maintain and modify the statewide discretionary sentencing guidelines in cases of felony probation violations.

House Bill 1320 also came at the recommendation of the Sentencing Commission. This bill makes code revisions to clarify and effectuate the Commission’s approach to the development of sentencing

guidelines based on analysis of historical sentencing practices.

In addition to these bills, I am also happy to report that the House of Delegates has passed other legislation I sponsored on matters of importance to Southside and rural Virginia. These include important proposals to limit executive branch abuses, promote agricultural resources, and protect the religious liberty of Christian organizations and other faith groups. I look forward to describing these pieces of legislation, and promoting the ideas behind them, in future writings as I argue for their passage in the Democrat controlled Senate.

Contact me at 16th House District, P.O. Box K, Chatham, Virginia, 24531; call (434) 432-1600 – Chatham or (804) 698-1016 – Richmond.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cursing the air

I am responding to Caleb Robertson’s letter where he was suggesting that we back off of our leaders who sometimes use vulgarity. He noted where President Trump said the “F” word in an

interview and compared it to President Biden calling Peter Doocey a “...stupid son of a b_____”.

I realize it is almost impossible to watch a movie, a podcast or even live TV and escape the “F” bomb.

It’s as if there would be no dialogue without it????? But I digress.

I must be missing context, but I find very little similarity between these two events. There is a big difference in me having a conversation and saying, “son of a b_____” and me calling some-

one a “stupid son of a b_____” (which I would NEVER do!).

Using vulgarity is inappropriate but calling people vulgar names is disgusting. Especially by the leader of the greatest country on the earth.

I am not justifying cursing

or vulgar language. But to say what President Biden called Peter Doocey is just a bad word is missing the point.

Cursing in the air is not the same as cursing someone.

Gary Martin,
Collinsville

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Words, thoughts and history

There’s a six-year gap between my older brother and me, and until I was fifteen there was always an astronomical size difference. While, in my opinion, he roughed me up pretty good he was greatly restrained by our dad. While my brother had his size I had my words, and I was unmerciful. I’m not talking about profanities, but putdowns, comebacks, and quips.

When I was eight my nephew came along. With my youth, and such a small age gap, we have been, in some ways, more like cousins than an uncle and nephew. I knew that I wasn’t allowed to “rough up” on him, but I still had my words; I could easily get under his skin. My nephew, however, did not always have words so he was usually quick to throw hands which prompted my dad’s reoccurring line: “You crossed the line: you hit.” Words were tolerable, hitting was not.

I’m still a big fan of “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Children

used to grow up hearing from the adults, “Use your words.” Well, right now in Canada adults are being told that they cannot use their words. Prime Minister Trudeau has issued “The Emergencies Act” against a peaceful demonstration.

Some might ask, “What does any of this have to do with the U.S.A.?” American Politicians are banding with the Canadian state against the people. On February 12th The Hill reported, “The Biden administration pressed the Canadian government Thursday to use its power to end the truck blockade caused by protesters demonstrating against COVID-19 restrictions... Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg discussed the issue with Canadian officials, asking them to help shut down the border blockades...”

I believe that we need to remember who we are as Americans. Founding Father, Thomas Jefferson, said, “I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind

of man.” Prime Minister Trudeau called the trucker-protesters a “small fringe group... who are holding unacceptable views.”

Is this not the tyranny of which Jefferson wrote: “Over the mind of man?” We, the people, feel as Abbie Hoffman felt on the stand of the 1969 Chicago trial: “I’ve never been on trial for my thoughts.” We are not in 1969; are we in 1984?

Though it’s not actually in the book, but the movie “The Count of Monte Cristo,” we would not have the latter without the former. In the story when a character lends aid to the then exiled Napoleon Bonaparte he says, “The difference between treason and patriotism is only a matter of dates.” I believe that men will look back to this moment and see the Canadian truckers and their friends as patriots.

There are discussions of American truckers hosting a similar demonstration at the northern border. I say, “Gentleman, start your engines.”

Caleb Robertson,
Martinsville

Letters to the Editor Guidelines

Henry County Enterprise welcomes letters to the editor and/or reader viewpoints of 500 words or less. Submissions may be edited for clarity, length, legal ramifications or general taste at the editor’s discretion. We reserve the right to refuse to publish submitted letters for the same reasons. All letters must be signed by an individual and include community. Letters that do not meet these guidelines will not be considered for publication. Viewpoints and opinions expressed in letters selected for publication are the opinions of the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of Henry County Enterprise.

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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

P&HCC to mark 60th anniversary with year of celebrations

This will be a year of celebration for Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC), because 2022 marks P&HCC's 60th anniversary – a milestone traditionally known as the "Diamond Anniversary." College officials kicked off the celebration during two start-of-the-semester addresses –the first to employees and the latter to students and community members via Facebook Live.

"So much has happened over the last 60 years –so much worth celebrating," said Dr. Greg Hodges, president. "We've come such a tremendously long way from our first graduating class of 28 students. We are now an internationally recognized premier

training and education facility and a major proponent of the economic renaissance of our region. My predecessor, Dr. Angeline Godwin, used to say, 'there is not a place you can turn in this town and not see the thumbprint of the college.' It's been an incredible 60 years, and I am convinced this is just the beginning."

The college was founded in 1962 as a branch school of the University of Virginia. Almost a decade later the college joined the Virginia Community College System as one of the state's 23 community colleges. Throughout every change over the last 60 years, the college has remained a center for learning and growth

for this community. Thousands of Martinsville, Patrick, Franklin, and Henry County residents have benefited from the college's many offerings – whether by getting a degree or credential that led to employment, getting entrepreneurial advice that led to a successful business venture, or simply enjoying a Patriot Players production. The number of lives that this community college has touched over the last 60 years is incalculable.

To celebrate its Diamond Anniversary, the college is planning activities and events throughout the year, including a birthday party in March in recognition of the House of Delegates passing an

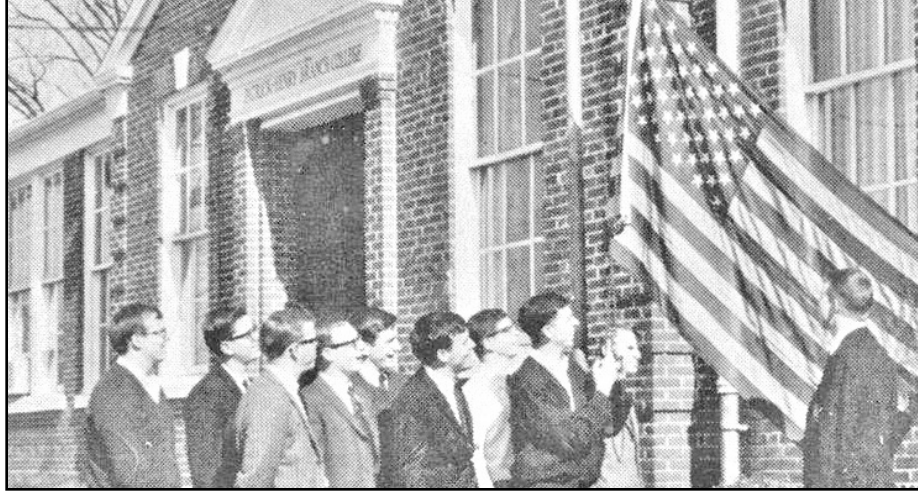
appropriations bill on March 5, 1962, which officially established the college. Additional events include a special 60th anniversary themed season of Patriot Players productions (which will be announced soon), a homecoming tailgate event for students, alumni, and community members in early fall, as well as a Diamond Gala event in late fall.

Outside of these larger events, the college will be commemorating the milestone throughout the year on its social channels and on a special 60th anniversary website. Alumni, community members, and businesses will have the opportunity to participate in the anniversary celebration, learn

more about the college's history, and recognize their friends and loved ones who are making a difference in their communities after getting their start at P&HCC.

"We know there are numerous success stories out there, from both students and businesses alike, that highlight the true impact Patrick & Henry has had in this community," said Tiffani Underwood, director of the P&HCC Foundation. "Whether P&HCC is where you got your start, or it's where you changed your career and your life, we want to hear from you."

To share a success story or to learn more, visit <https://www.patrickhenry.edu/60/>.



P&HCC when it opened.



Inside P&HCC's Library.

Three new members appointed to P&HCC board

At Patrick & Henry Community College's next College Board meeting, the board will officially welcome its three newest members: Dr. Clyde DeLoach, Brandon Scott, and Jewell Drewery. These members were appointed by their respective localities to fill vacancies that arose last year.

A resident of Stuart, Virginia, DeLoach was appointed to the college board by Patrick County for a four-year term to serve the remainder of the term vacated by Wren Williams. DeLoach has had a varied career having worked as a Respiratory Therapist for 15 years before getting his Ph. D from Baylor University, and he has been a Methodist Minister for 27 years, serving most recently at Stuart United Methodist Church until 2007. He is now retired and currently serves on the Patrick County Board of Supervisors as the Chair of the Blue Ridge District.

Scott who lives and works in Rocky Mount, Virginia was appointed to the college board by Franklin County to serve the remaining term vacated by Bill O'Brien. Scott has been working



When the P&HCC College Board meets in March, it will welcome three new members (pictured left to right) - Dr. Clyde DeLoach, Brandon Scott, and Jewell Drewery. The board also will vote on a slate of officers to serve for the next two years.



at Earth Environmental and Civil as a Professional Civil Engineer for more than 15 years.

Drewery has recently returned to the

Martinsville area after living and working in Charlotte, N.C. as a senior account executive in sales. Upon her return to Martinsville, Drewery began a new career



as a Realtor with Rives S. Brown. Drewery was appointed to the college board to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Dr. Dennis Casey

Reversion from page 1

erendum in the reversion process of one locality rather than sponsoring legislation that tackled the underlying fundamentals of the code section governing the reversion process in general. He called the legislation "eleventh hour stall tactics" and said it was unfair to the process.

"This process is already laid out," he argued. "There's been agreement and MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding) hammered out between all the localities until the last moment. They figured out they could use this as a stall tactic in December and put the brakes on it all. So, there's underlying trust issues and the fact that taxes will have to be raised in Henry County."

County Administrator Tim Hall previously stated that a study indicated the county could face an 8-cent tax increase to cover the costs of reversion.

"If we're going to tackle the issue," McPike continued, "tackle the fundamental policy ... that's where it needs to be resolved, but not at the eleventh hour."

Deeds, referencing a letter written by Martinsville NAACP president Naomi Hodge-Muse in support of Stanley's legislation, said, "the problem is not reversion, the problem is contained in the third paragraph (of the letter): 'historically, the Black community is

essentially ignored by the Henry County Board of Supervisors.' This is a dispute between a white majority county and a minority majority city, a city that's fiscally stressed, a city that has gone before the (Commission on Local Government) and they have made a determination that reversion is the appropriate thing."

He said Martinsville and Henry County were once the "breadbasket of Virginia that fed much of the prosperity of the state. They've fallen on hard times in recent years and that's why reversion is the choice of city council."

Deeds noted that negotiations were already underway between Martinsville and Henry County. "This referendum is an eleven-and-a-half-hour effort to delay reversion, which is inevitable, and further have us take up sides between the county and city," he concluded, urging his colleagues to join him in voting against the bill.

In his response, Stanley recalled that in 2006, Martinsville City Council unanimously passed a resolution that promised city residents "the city) would not revert nor take a step towards reversion from a city to a town without a referendum of the voters in the City of Martinsville to be held first. They never retracted that promise. That is a promise owed to the people of the city of

Martinsville.

When asked about Stanley's comments on the referendum, Martinsville Mayor Kathy Lawson shared a statement from City Attorney and Assistant City Manager Eric Monday:

"The 2006 resolution was a defensive response to one of the county's many repeated (unsuccessful) attempts to change the reversion laws to prevent Martinsville from reverting," it said. "The focus of the resolution was not on supporting a referendum, but defeating the county's efforts to change the reversion laws. The 2006 council did not ask for a referendum or support pro-referendum legislation."

"No member of the 2006 council is on council now, and no council in the intervening 16 years has ever asked for referendum legislation. The 2006 resolution is not binding on the current council, nor upon the current reversion process begun in 2020," the statement concluded.

Monday said this marks the sixth occasion legislation regarding a voter referendum on reversion has been brought up in the General Assembly, and each time previously, the city was successful in fighting its passage. In this newest attempt, Monday said the city hired a lobbyist to help argue its case in

Richmond.

As the General Assembly prepares for crossover—when bills passed by the Senate go before the House and those approved by the House go before the Senate—Monday said the city will continue to oppose the legislation though, "obviously we are realistic" about the chances of success.

After Stanley's bill passed the Senate, Marshall expressed confidence that both pieces of legislation would survive crossover. "Stanley's bill passed overwhelmingly in the Senate and my bill passed overwhelmingly in the House," he said. "The only issue is people do change their minds."

Ultimately though, he feels "we will get something to the governor's desk," adding that, if the legislation is passed, it will become effective July 1, meaning city voters could see the issue on their November ballots

this year.

Marshall credited Martinsville Commissioner of Revenue Ruth Easley with rallying people to support the legislation.

"She was a real help behind the scenes, getting a lot of people, making a lot of phone calls that helped move this forward," he said, and added that Easley rallied a number of Black ministers, who wrote letters to the General Assembly and appeared via Zoom to speak during committee hearings on the issue. "We wanted to show that this wasn't a Republican issue or a Democratic issue, it was an issue of good government," Marshall said, "and that's what my whole point was all along."

He sponsored similar legislation before calling for a referendum on reversion, but it was not successful until now.

"This is a big, big

question for the City of Martinsville," he said. "A question this big, I think the citizens should have a voice in that, and evidently the members of the House and the members of the Senate think so too."

Marshall's bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Local Government, which approved Stanley's bill in a 9-5 vote. As of Tuesday, Stanley's bill had not been assigned a House committee, though Marshall's was approved 14-8 by the Counties, Cities, and Towns Committee.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS grid with words like STRETCH, SALINE, etc.

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Construction

from page 1

most precious natural resource, and I am so very proud to stand beside Sen. McClellan as we continue our efforts to make sure that every child in Virginia, no matter what their zip code, has a chance at receiving that world class, 21st century education."

Most of the schools in Henry County are more than 50 years old, according to Henry County Public Schools Director of Communications Monica Hatchett. The oldest building, Sanville Elementary, was built in 1927. Of the division's 15 school buildings, only three have not yet met that half-century mark. Bassett High School, built in 1978, is 44 years old, and Magna Vista High School was constructed 10 years later, in 1988. The division's newest building is Meadow View Elementary, which began construction in 2018.

Travis Clemons, executive director of administrative services for Martinsville City Public Schools, said the city's youngest school, Martinsville High School, opened 54 years ago in 1968. While each of the schools have had "some touch of renovation over the years, much of it is still dated," he said.

One of the bills, Senate Bill (SB) 481 encourages local governing bodies and school boards to collaborate to set aside funds for capital projects that were appropriated to the school board by the governing body but are not spent by the school board within the fiscal year. It also permits any school board to finance capital projects with any funds appropriated to it by the local governing body that are unexpected by the board in any year.

Henry County's Board of Supervisors and school board already have a version of this agreement, according to the county's Public Information Officer Brandon Martin. The two bodies passed a joint resolution allowing the first \$500,000 of unexpended funds to carry over to the school's next budget for capital improvement projects. The next \$500,000 would go back to the Board of Supervisors, and if \$1 million or more is left over at the end of the year, then the two boards split the funds dollar for dollar.

City Manager Leon Towarnicki said the city does not have such an agreement with its school division. Instead, unspent funds at the end of the fiscal year accrue to the city's unexpended fund balance, as is the case with any other city department that does not spend its full budget amount. "That fund balance is regularly used as a source of revenue to then balance the following year's budget," he said.

Clemons noted that city council "has been good about allocating monies for capital improvements" and, in recent history, has not denied any of the division's funding requests for capital projects.

He said that, in a normal, pre-pandemic year, he would anticipate \$250,000-\$500,000 in unspent funds. He explained there are hundreds of line items in the division's budget that do not have exact values, and best practices dictate budgeting conservatively for those unknowns. No one, for example, can predict exactly how much electricity or water a building will consume over a year or budget for it precisely.

Clemons noted that a key word in the description of the bill is "encourages," meaning the decision to set aside unspent funds is reliant upon a school board and its governing body arriving at an amicable agreement. "The relationship between a school division and the governing body comes into play," he said.

Another bill in the package allows all localities in Virginia to impose a 1 percent increase in sales tax, subject to voter approval, to be used for school construction or renovation. Currently, that sales tax is only permitted in nine specific localities, including Henry County, where voters chose to implement the tax increase last year.

Hatchett said funds from the tax increase will help the division "achieve some important goals in the area of safe and innovative learning spaces," which

are part of its strategic plan.

Stanley, during previous debate on another piece of legislation he sponsored calling for a voter referendum in Martinsville on the issue of reversion, stated that Martinsville had the opportunity to participate in the 1 percent increase but rejected the offer. "The response was, 'we don't want the income,'" Stanley told the Senate Local Government Committee.

City Attorney and Assistant City Manager Eric Monday said that he searched his records after Stanley's claim and found no written communication of the city ever being offered the opportunity to participate in the tax option.

"We've looked back, and I don't see any email record where we were asked if we wanted to do that," he said.

Martinsville Mayor Kathy Lawson said that no one has contacted the city council "to participate with a proposal that would add another tax to our citizens."

Further, she said, the tax would go unused for some time because it can only be used for new school construction and renovation, and not to pay down existing debt for previous capital projects.

"The city has updated all our schools in recent years and are currently still repaying the debt for some of those facilities. We have, already in place, the means to pay the debt for our school improvements" through the meals tax. "Since we have already renovated all our facilities and no new construction is pending, this would be a tax that would sit unused for years to come," she said.

City Manager Leon Towarnicki added that, while all schools are currently "functioning in a satisfactory manner," future renovations could be needed, "which may be a reason to take up the sales tax issue at a later date."

Yet another bill, SB 471, adopts changes to the state Literary Fund to make more money available to local school divisions through loans with lower interest rates than currently allowed by law.

Clemons said that the city's schools likely would not be able to take advantage of that piece of legislation because the division is currently unable to leverage a loan through the city.

"We've not been able to leverage and use the Literary Fund for many years now," he said.

Another bill in the package, SB 473, creates a School Construction Fund and Program to provide grants to school boards that leverage federal, state, and local programs and resources to finance the design and construction of new school buildings and facilities or the modernization and maintenance of existing buildings and facilities.

SB 238 requires the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of General Services, to develop or adopt and maintain a data collection tool to assist each school board to determine the relative age of each public school building in the local division and the amount of maintenance reserve funds necessary to restore each building.

Clemons noted that stipulations in the fine print of such bills, once they reach their final form, could impact a division's ability to take advantage of the funding or programs. He added that there have been several instances in which various stipulations in a piece of legislation prevented Martinsville from benefiting from it.

Being in the midst of reversion, too, he said, "dramatically impacts things."

Hatchett, on the other hand, takes a more optimistic view. She said that Henry County Public Schools "works diligently each year to complete important capital improvements in our schools, as our budget and savings allow." Funds from this legislative package "would ensure that we are able to accomplish projects more quickly than has been done in the past, which would be of great benefit to the division as we continue to work to maintain and improve our schools."

OBITUARIES

Juanita Faye Evans

Juanita Faye Evans, 68, of Martinsville, passed away Friday, February 11, 2022, at her home. She was born December 29, 1953, in Los Angeles, California, to the late Robert L. Garvey and Betty Faye Evans Garvey. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by a daughter, Kellie Evans Gomez; sister, Betty Louise Howard; brothers, Stanley Eugene Lowe and Jeff Robert Garvey; and a great-grandson, Martine Evans. She was a member



of Broad Street Christian Church. She enjoyed gardening, word search puzzles, reading the Bible, and spending time with her family. Juanita is survived by her daughter, Cara Lynn Evans; brother, Leonard Lee Garvey; six grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

The Memorial Service will be private. Wright Funeral Service and Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at www.wrightfuneralservices.net.

Shirley Harrell

Shirley Harrell, 75, of Martinsville, Virginia passed away February 10, 2022, at SOVAH Health of Martinsville. She was born January 22, 1947, Martinsville, Virginia to the late Grady Lee Brim and Carrie Ethel Spencer Brim. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her sister, Carlene Long; and brother, Ervin Brim. Shirley attended Christian View Missionary Baptist Church and was a Sunday School teacher. She enjoyed playing the piano and singing. She loved baking, especially red velvet cake, pumpkin pie, and pecan pie. She wanted to stay active and did so by walking and aerobics. She was a graduate of Carver

High School. She is survived by her husband, Walter Harrell; daughters, Dianna Lipscomb, and Angelica Holmes; sons, Jonathan Lipscomb, and Walter Harrell Jr.; brothers, James Brim (Linda), and James Martin; four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

The funeral was February 16, 2022, at Christian View Missionary Baptist Church. Pastor Gregory Perkins officiated. Burial was at Christian View Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery.

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

Ronald Gene Young

Ronald Gene Young, 83, of Martinsville, Virginia passed away on Thursday, February 10, 2022, at Martinsville Hospital. He was born on June 13, 1938, in Martinsville, Virginia to the late Harry Young and Bertha Bradley Young. He was also preceded by his brother, Buck and his son, Mark. Gene loved his family and his work in Vero Beach, Florida. He



is survived by his wife, Texas and daughter, Kim. Also surviving are his brother and sisters, Jackie, Jerry, and Betty. The funeral was on Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville Chapel. Pastor Peyton Gilbert officiated. Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, Virginia is serving the Young family. Online condolences may be made at norrisfuneral.com.

Ruby Teel Gibson

Ruby Teel Gibson, age 92, of Martinsville, Virginia, passed away on Friday, February 11, 2022, at the Landmark Center in Stuart, Virginia.

She was born on November 21, 1929, in Montgomery County to the late Lela Mae and Sidney Clyde Teel. She is also preceded in death by her husband of 57 years, Estes B Gibson; her sisters, Opal Teel, Reba Hamilton, Geneva Duncan, Orpha Willard, and Wilma Jean McKenzie; brothers, Colen, Dale, and William Ford Teel; and infant grandson, Joshua Arron Brooks.

She is survived by her children, Steven B Gibson (Ann P Gibson) of Martinsville, VA and Susan A Brooks (R Todd Brooks) of Cornelius N.C.; four grandchildren, eight nieces and six nephews.

While attending Radford University,



she worked at Radford Arsenal where she met her husband, Estes Gibson in the cafeteria. Later, Ruby and her husband moved to Martinsville, Virginia where she was an active member of the First United Methodist Church of Martinsville and other organizations in the area.

A graveside will be held at 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 26, 2022, at Sunset Cemetery in Christiansburg, Virginia, with Pastor David Westmoreland officiating.

Memorial donations may be made to First United Methodist Church of Martinsville, Mountain Valley Hospice, or SPCA of Martinsville-Henry County.

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

Nominations sought for advisory board

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is soliciting continuous nominations for membership to its National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board and its committees. The NAREEE Board is comprised of 15 members representing a specific category of U.S. agricultural stakeholders, and the Board's three committees include the Specialty Crop Committee (SCC), Citrus Disease Subcommittee (CDS) and National Genetic Resources Advisory Council (NGRAC). USDA expects to appoint or reappoint approximately 15 new Board and committee members in October 2022, in accordance with the federal statute.

"NAREEE Board members play an important advisory role for USDA's science agencies as they shape and advance the large-scale, collaborative research initiatives needed to address tough challenges that our nation's farmers, ranchers and consumers

face. They provide critical input and connection to the most urgent research needs across the United States," said Dr. Shefali Mehta, Deputy Under Secretary for USDA's Research, Education and Economics (REE) mission area. "We are looking for professionals with diverse perspectives, backgrounds and scientific expertise to ensure research on our nation's food and agricultural systems is fair and equitable and benefits all Americans."

The NAREEE Advisory Board provides feedback to the Secretary of Agriculture, to USDA's REE mission area, and to land-grant colleges and universities on food and agricultural research, education, extension and economics priorities and policies. The Advisory Board also provides reports and recommendations to the appropriate agricultural committees of the U.S. Congress.

The USDA is seeking nominations for committee members from individuals with knowledge

and interest in animal and plant genetics; citrus industry opportunities and barriers, especially citrus diseases; and specialty crops.

The Board seeks producers, academics, and persons in aquaculture, agriculture research, extension, educational institutions (especially those affiliated with minority serving institutions and colleges of veterinary medicine), state and local government, agricultural societies, public health organizations, producer organizations, industry, and rural and consumer organizations. Self-nominations are welcomed. The NAREEE Board will offer virtual meeting options for its twice per year meetings as well as the annual meetings of its committees/subcommittees. Nominations packages may be received continually until September 30, 2022, and should be sent by email to nareee@usda.gov. View the Federal Register notice for information on how to apply or visit the NAREEE website.

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CLASSIFIEDS



CLASSIFIEDS



Franklin County Farm Bureau receives education grant

Franklin County Farm Bureau recently was one of 11 communities across the U.S. to receive a White-Reinhardt grant from the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

The grant will be used to bring more advanced environmental educational classes into Franklin County elementary schools. The Franklin County Farm Bureau Women's Committee will use the funds to purchase a 3D EnviroScape® model that illustrates the role conservation efforts play in protecting watersheds and wetlands. Members of the committee will visit the schools and use the model to demonstrate the role farmers play in protecting the environment.

The AFBFA awarded a total of \$26,000 in scholarships and grants to help educators, volunteers and communities connect agriculture to students' daily lives. The foundation sponsors the scholarships and grants in cooperation with the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee through the White-Reinhardt Fund for Education. The fund was established to honor two former chairs of the committee, Berta White and Linda Reinhardt, who led the national effort to improve agricultural literacy.

The grants totaled \$11,000 and were awarded for creating new agricultural literacy projects or expanding existing efforts.

To place a classified ad or for more information call (276) 694-3101.

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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Quantum Consulting and Accounting Resources, LLC

Quantum Consulting and Accounting Resources, LLC is a public accounting firm in Stuart, VA. We are looking for an experienced, self-motivated bookkeeper to grow with our firm. This position will perform typical bookkeeping tasks, as well as a wide range of special accounting projects. The ability to learn new tasks and to work independently is a

must. The bookkeeper reports to the Senior Manager. Interested applicants should email their resume to susanheath@qcarllc.com.

Requirements include a Bachelor/Associates degree with major in Accounting, five years bookkeeping/accounting experience, and Quickbooks experience.

Responsibilities will include recording financial transactions, compiling financial reports, verifying accounting data, notifying senior staff of any accounting errors, and special projects, as deemed necessary.

PHCC

Patrick & Henry Community College in Martinsville, VA has the following job openings: Educational Talent Search Advisor, Law Enforcement Officer, Science Lab Assistant, MHC After 3 Program Leader, MHC After 3 After School Instructor, and Adjunct Faculty in English, Mechatronics, NC-CER Plumbing, Nursing, and Welding. For details and application information please visit <http://patrickhenry.edu/>,

HELP WANTED

scroll to the bottom of the page, and click on Employment Opportunities. Patrick & Henry Community College is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, or veteran's status. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

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Call 276-340-5871 anytime leave message and number.

Axton Solar, LLC will host a community meeting on Thursday, March 3, 2022 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, and to answer questions from the public. Interested members of the public are invited to attend in person. If you would prefer to participate by telephone or by computer you may find additional information and instructions here: <https://axtonsolarproject.info/>

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 **March 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 **March 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-22-04 Gregory L. and Anne M. Benton**

The property is located at 902 Eggleston Falls Rd, in the Ridgeway District. The Tax Map numbers are 62.3/84F, 84J, 84K, 84L. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 3.4-acre from Suburban Residential District S-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to build additional accessory buildings 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

VIRGINIA:
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE CITY OF MARTINSVILLE
CITY OF MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA)
Plaintiff,)
v.)
COUNTY OF HENRY, VIRGINIA)
Defendant.)
SERVE: George A.H. Lyle, Esq.)
Henry County Attorney)
County Administrative Building)
3300 Kings Mountain Road)
Martinsville, Virginia 24112)
SERVE: Jimmie L. Adams)
Chairman, Board of Supervisors)
County Administrative Building)
3300 Kings Mountain Road)
Martinsville, Virginia 24112)

NOTICE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, pursuant to § 15.2-4101(B) of the Virginia Code, that, on February 7, 2022, or as soon thereafter as may be feasible, the City of Martinsville will file a petition in the Circuit Court for the City of Martinsville for an order granting it town status within the County of Henry. Attached to this notice and incorporated herein by reference is a certified copy of the ordinance of the Martinsville City Council, passed by a recorded majority vote of all the members, and authorizing the filing of the above-referenced petition.

Dated: February 4, 2022

Respectfully submitted,
CITY OF MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA
By: /s/ Stephen C. Peipgrass
John S. West (VSB No. 34771)
Robert S. Claiborne, Jr. (VSB No. 86332)
Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP
1001 Haxall Point, Suite 1500
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Telephone: 804.697.1200
Facsimile: 804.697.1339
john.west@troutman.com
stephen.peipgrass@troutman.com
robert.claiborne@troutman.com
Counsel for the City of Martinsville

CERTIFICATION

I, Karen Roberts, Clerk of the City Council of the City of Martinsville, do certify that the foregoing is a true copy of an Ordinance passed by a recorded majority vote of all members of the City Council at a meeting convened on the 27th day of February, 2022. The membership of the City Council at that time consisted of five members, including the Mayor, and the Ordinance was passed by the City Council by a recorded vote of four ayes and one nay.

This, the 4th day of February, 2022.

/s/ Karen Roberts
Karen Roberts, Clerk of the City Council

CITY OF MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA ORDINANCE No. 2022-U-1

AN ORDINANCE TO PETITION THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE CITY OF MARTINSVILLE FOR AN ORDER GRANTING TOWN STATUS

WHEREAS, on December 10, 2019, the City Council voted in favor of the City of Martinsville's (the "City" or "Martinsville") reversion from an independent city to a town located within and constituting part of the County of Henry (the "County" or "Henry County"), following discussion and study regarding the feasibility of the same;

WHEREAS, on September 18, 2020, the City, by counsel and pursuant to Virginia Code § 15.2-2907(A), filed with the Commission on Local Government (the "Commission") a notice of its intent to petition for an order granting it town status, seeking to establish a traditional town-county relationship with Henry County, including the same rights, powers, and responsibilities as are granted to existing towns consistent with Virginia law, and this notice is incorporated herein by reference;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Virginia Code § 15.2-2908, the city-to-town reversion proceeding was deemed to have been instituted upon City's filing of the notice with the Commission;

WHEREAS, the City notified all local governments located within or contiguous to, or sharing functions, revenue, or tax sources with, the City of its intent to petition for an order granting it town status, seeking to establish a traditional town-county relationship with Henry County, including the same rights, powers, and responsibilities as are granted to existing towns consistent with Virginia law;

WHEREAS, on November 30, 2020, Henry County, by counsel, filed its response to Martinsville's notice of intent to petition for an order granting it town status;

WHEREAS, the City and the County entered into negotiations to seek a voluntary settlement of the city-to-town reversion proceeding;

WHEREAS, the City and the County entered into a Memorandum of Understanding dated April 29, 2021, in contemplation of a comprehensive settlement agreement providing for the City's reversion to town status and addressing the allocation of governmental services following that change in governmental structure, the transfer of certain properties, the sharing of certain revenues, a temporary moratorium of annexation rights, and other matters;

WHEREAS, on May 26, 2021, at a joint public meeting, the respective governing bodies of the City and the County approved the Memorandum of Understanding;

WHEREAS, the City and the County reached a Voluntary Settlement Agreement (the "Agreement"), pursuant to Title 15.2, Chapter 34 (§ 15.2-3400, et seq.) and Chapter 41 (§ 15.2-4100, et seq.) of the Virginia Code and consistent with the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding;

WHEREAS, the reversion of Martinsville from an independent city to a town pursuant to the terms of the Agreement would have established a traditional town-county relationship between Martinsville and Henry County, with the same rights, powers, and responsibilities as other towns and counties, except as provided by special law or modified in the Agreement;

WHEREAS, the City and the County concluded that the City's reversion to a town located within and constituting part of Henry County in accordance with the terms of the Agreement meets the requirements of Virginia Code § 15.2-4106;

WHEREAS, on August 24, 2021, the respective governing bodies of the City and the County approved the Agreement by resolution, directing that the Agreement be referred for review by the Commission and stating their intention, after the Commission's review, to adopt the Agreement and thereafter to petition the appropriate Circuit Court to affirm and validate the Agreement and give it full force and effect;

WHEREAS, on August 25, 2021, the City and the County, by counsel, filed a joint notice with the Commission, requesting that the Commission review the Agreement, find that the City's reversion to town status pursuant to the Agreement is in the best interests of the Commonwealth, and recommend that the Agreement be affirmed and given full force and effect by a special, three-judge court;

WHEREAS, the Commission heard evidence and argument presented by the City and the County and conducted a hearing in September 2021 as required by law and issued its findings and recommendations in a report dated October 2021 (the "Report"), and this Report is incorporated herein by reference;

WHEREAS, the Commission's Report dated October 2021 found the City's reversion to town status to be in the best interests of the City, the County, and the Commonwealth and recommended approval by a three-judge, special court;

WHEREAS, on November 9, 2021, the City Council passed an ordinance approving and adopting the Agreement by recorded affirmative vote of a majority of its members, after having advertised its intention to approve the Agreement at least once a week for two successive weeks in a newspaper having a general circulation in its jurisdiction, containing a descriptive summary of the Agreement, and holding a public hearing on the Agreement prior to the adoption of the ordinance;

WHEREAS, on December 14, 2021, despite its many prior representations and commitments, the Henry County Board of Supervisors voted against an ordinance approving and adopting the Agreement by recorded vote of a majority of its members, for reasons other than the best interests of the City, the County, and the Commonwealth;

WHEREAS, Chapter 41 of Title 15.2 of the Virginia Code (§ 15.2-4100, et seq.) requires the City, subsequent to the Commission's review, to pass an ordinance by a recorded majority vote of all the members of the City Council, to petition the Circuit Court for the City of Martinsville, alleging that the City meets the criteria set out in Virginia Code § 15.2-4106 for an order granting town status to the City;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Virginia Code § 15.2-4107, the three-judge, special court may, in its discretion, direct any appropriate state agency, in addition to the Commission, to gather and present evidence, including statistical data and exhibits, for the court, to be subject to the usual rules of evidence;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Virginia Code § 15.2-4106, the three-judge, special court shall enter an order granting town status if, after hearing the evidence, the court finds that criteria set out therein are met;

WHEREAS, based on the latest United States decennial census, the City has a current population of less than 50,000 people;

WHEREAS, Henry County is the adjoining county and will be made a party defendant to the proceedings;

WHEREAS, the proposed change from city to town status will not substantially impair the ability of the County to meet the service needs of its population;

WHEREAS, the proposed change from city to town status will not result in a substantially inequitable sharing of the resources and liabilities of the Town of Martinsville and the County;

WHEREAS, the proposed change from city to town status is, in the balance of equities, in the best interests of the City, the County, the Commonwealth, and the people of the City and the County;

WHEREAS, the proposed change from city to town status is in the best interests of the Commonwealth in promoting strong and viable units of government; and

WHEREAS, the change from city to town status should be under terms and conditions that ensure an orderly transition from city to town status; adjust financial inequities; balance the equities between the parties; and ensure protection of the best interests of the City, the County, the Commonwealth, and the people of the City and the County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia,

1. The City Council, by this Ordinance, hereby declares that the City desires to revert to the status of a town within and constituting part of Henry County, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 41 of Title 15.2 of the Virginia Code (§ 15.2-4100, et seq.).
2. The City Council, by this Ordinance, hereby declares that the City desires the change from city to town status to be under terms and conditions appropriate to ensure an orderly transition from city to town status; adjust financial inequities; balance the equities between the parties; and ensure protection of the best interests of the City, the County, the Commonwealth, and the people of the City and the County.
3. The City Council hereby authorizes the City Manager and the City's legal counsel to petition the Circuit Court for the City of Martinsville for an order, pursuant to Chapter 41 of Title 15.2 of the Virginia Code (§ 15.2-4100, et seq.), establishing Martinsville as a town within and constituting part of Henry County, and Henry County shall be made a party defendant to the proceeding.
4. The City Manager and the City's legal counsel are hereby authorized to take all other actions, and to employ such special consultants as may be needed, to accomplish the objectives set forth in this Ordinance.
5. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect on the date of its adoption.

Adopted this 27th day of January, 2022.

Attest:
/s/ Karen Roberts
Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

Beautification donation gifted to club

The Kiwanis Club of Greater Bassett Area recently made a \$500 donation to the Community to be used for mowing and the beautification of the Bassett area.



Barry Helmstutler, right, is shown presenting the check to Clifford Stone, of the Greater Bassett Area Community (GBAC).

Students enjoy Virginia Repertory Theatre's "I Have a Dream"

Piedmont Arts brought Virginia Repertory Theatre's original production, "I Have a Dream: The Life and Times of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." to local schools on February 10 and 11.

Students at Carlisle Upper School, Laurel Park Middle School, Fieldale-Collinsville Middle School and Stanleytown Elementary School saw their first live performance in two years, and several were moved to tears at Virginia

Repertory's portrayal of this great leader.

Students, teachers and community members have the opportunity to stream Virginia Repertory Theatre's production of "Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad" beginning Monday, February 21 at 3 p.m. through Monday, February 28 at 3 p.m. For the access code, email Director of Programs Sarah Short at sshort@piedmontarts.org.



Virginia Repertory Theatre performs "I Have a Dream: The Life and Times of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." at Fieldale-Collinsville Middle School on February 11. The performance was presented as part of Piedmont Arts' educational outreach program.

February is American Heart Month



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Firefighters from page 1

County Burn Building Facility was constructed for a number of scenarios in a relatively safe environment. It was dedicated in 2004 and built with funds from the Harvest Foundation, Virginia Fire Services Board, and the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

Propane lines in the building kept the flames burning and temperature sensors in the structure could be used to shut everything down in an instant if the situation got out of control. Exhaust fans helped remove smoke and steam from the interior.

Instructors were both inside the building and around it, watching with the practiced eyes that years of experience provides, as firefighting students set up ladders, fed hoses into the building, and worked together to safely extinguish the fires, honing the skills that are essential to their new career path.

"This is the first time we've ever done a career academy," Henry County Director of Public Safety Matt Tatum said. "We've done firefighter training before, done EMT training before for many, many years," but the training has always been for volunteers.

This group of students, he said, are training from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, to gain the skills, pass the tests, and earn all the certifications necessary to become a full-time firefighter/EMTs.

The academy was created due to staffing shortages that are being felt across the nation.

"We were just so short-staffed," said Tatum.

Previously, he said, "Henry County was blessed with a tremendous amount of very good, qualified volunteer firefighter/EMTs and so we hired from that pool. Now, we're to the point that the people who do it as a volunteer don't want to do it as a career," meaning the county had difficulty finding applicants who were already trained. The solution was to find new recruits and train them, hence the creation of the academy.

Tatum likened the strategy to that of joining the police force — "you don't hire a volunteer police officer that's already trained, you hire someone that wants to be a police officer, you train them, and then you put them in the field."

"They will come out (of the academy) being well-trained entry-level firefighter/EMTs," Tatum said, adding that there will be many opportunities for the students to advance even further in their training. He hopes many will pursue the two-year associate degree program offered through Patrick & Henry Community College. The education is necessary to become a qualified paramedic which, he said, "is

the highest level of medical pre-hospital level care training you can get."

Though details are not yet confirmed, Tatum said the county plans to advance many of the students through its Firefighter 2 program.

This first academy, he said, began in November and is being conducted in partnership with Franklin County. He said officials approached Martinsville, Patrick County, Pittsylvania County, and Danville to invite them to participate as well, but none did.

Only two Henry County trainees were part of Monday morning's group. The rest of the nine-member class were from Franklin County. Tatum said five recruits from Henry County began the class, but two dropped out early in the program, quickly realizing the job was not for them. A third, who Tatum described as one of the best in the class and a star pupil, had to move out of the area due to a family issue.

One of the two remaining Henry County recruits, Kevin Perkins of Martinsville, said he chose this new career path (he previously worked at a call center) to serve his community and to be a positive influence for future generations.

The training, Perkins said, is "not what I expected. It's a lot more strenuous, but that's great because it's preparing us for the real world."

Tatum acknowledged the job was a physically demanding one — he said a study was completed some time ago that concluded that 20-minutes of active firefighting equated to eight hours of manual labor in a standard industry.

He said that the air pack itself, which a firefighter carries on their back, weighs around 20 pounds. In addition, firefighters must be strong enough to lift and carry both equipment and people.

Some academic ability, too, is necessary for success in the field, Tatum said. "You have to be able to take tests, you have to be able to remember things and apply things, be critical thinkers," he said.

Flexibility is yet another quality Tatum looks for in a firefighter. "There's no such thing as a Monday through Friday, 8 to 5 firefighter," he said, explaining fire crews could be called on weekdays and weekends, early mornings and late nights, in good weather and bad, and must be ready to answer the call.

Essential, too, is compassion. Tatum quoted Teddy Roosevelt, who is credited with saying, "Nobody cares what you know until they know that you care."

"What we are looking for is the individual who truly cares about the

other person," Tatum said. Compassion and trustworthiness are both critical. Tatum said applicants also must have a clean criminal history.

"When you're on calls, many times you're dealing with people in their most vulnerable state, and when you come into those homes, you're put into a position of trust that the checkbook that's on the kitchen table will still be on the table when you leave," he said.

All of these qualities — physical and mental ability, compassion, trustworthiness — are critical in a profession in which "many times, your decisions truly are life and death," Tatum said.

The morning was dappled with reminders of the life-and-death job these recruits were training to do. Often, when students were listening to instructors' directions or critiques, a sharp, loud beeping would break through the silence. A slight shake or wiggle would quiet the device.

This was the sound of the PASS (Personal Alert Safety System) alerts worn by each student and firefighters on the job. The devices, Assistant Chief of Training Kenny Shumate said, are designed to go beep when a firefighter is motionless for more than 20 seconds, alerting others that one of their colleagues could be in danger.

Tatum said the recruit pay for the Henry County trainees was a little more than \$12 per hour, or about \$25,500 annually. Once the students graduate and go into the field (this first class, which began in November 2022 will graduate within the week), their pay automatically increases to an estimated \$33,000 per year.

Tatum said applications are now being accepted for the next academy, which is set to begin May 2. Franklin County has already committed to joining again, he said. While he does not anticipate recruits from Martinsville, Danville, or Pittsylvania County, Tatum said he has not yet heard back from Patrick County to gauge its interest in participating.

Overall, he and the instructors agreed the initial graduating class has done well.

In addition to the live burn testing completed that day, trainees must pass a 100-question state test and a skills test, during which eight skills are randomly selected that the 28 recruits must master, Shumate said.

He seemed confident that the students of this first career academy would do well in meeting the challenges to come.

"They're ready," he said.

Anyone wishing to apply for the next Blue Ridge Fire & EMS Academy may visit <http://www.henry-countyva.gov/jobs>.

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