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Supreme Court appoints panel on reversion

Callie Hietala Staff writer

The Supreme Court of Virginia has appointed the 3-judge panel that will rule on the issue of Martinsville's reversion to a town.

The judges are the Hon. Rufus A. Banks, Jr., of the 1st Judicial Circuit (Chesapeake), the Hon. Frederick A. Rowlett, of the 28th Judicial Circuit (City of Bristol, Smyth County, and Washington County), and the Hon. W. Reilly Marchant of the 13th Judicial Circuit (Richmond), who will serve as the Chief Judge of the special court.

Stephen Piepgrass of Troutman

firm representing Pepper, the Martinsville in its reversion proceedings, said because the panel was just appointed, he is unaware of what, if any, additional hearings on the issue the panel might want to have.

'You may recall that Henry County filed in Henry County Circuit Court a lawsuit saying the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) and the VSA (Voluntary Settlement Agreement) are essentially worthless and cannot be enforced in any way," City Attorney Eric Monday said during Tuesday's city council meeting.

On Jan. 4, the Henry County Board of Supervisors approved a motion to file a complaint for declaratory judgement in Henry County Circuit Court to stop the city's attempt to force the county to comply with the MOU and VSA. The supervisors voted 4-2 to reject the negotiated VSA in a Dec. 2021 meeting, a move that resulted in a contested reversion process.

"We are currently moving to have that case consolidated in front of the 3-judge panel, taking the position that state law says that the panel is empowered to rule on all matters that are related to reversion," Monday said. "It would then be our position that either the VSA or the MOU, both of which were signed by the county, still governs

this situation."

Though Piepgrass said a timeline is not yet in place, Monday said Tuesday, "I would anticipate that there would be some rulings coming from the 3-judge panel relatively quickly."

Even if the special court finds in favor of Martinsville's reversion, two companion bills passed by the General Assembly would require a voter referendum on the issue within the city before the court granted town status.

The city also submitted a letter to Gov. Glenn Youngkin asking him to veto the legislation. As of late Wednesday afternoon, Youngkin had taken no action on the bills.

Residents discuss issues at public input session on ARPA funding

Callie Hietala

Staff writer

Aid for the homeless, support for small business owners, and the need to rebrand Martinsville were among the topics discussed when Martinsville's City Council held a public input session on how it should allocate its federal American Rescue Plan (ARPA) dollars.

Among those to speak during the 3.5 hour, standing room only meeting was Keith Owens, executive director of Peer Recovery Connection. Owens said he would like some of the money to be directed toward a 30-bed "recovery program shelter" for the homeless.

"The number one contender for relapse is stable housing," Owens said. "If someone doesn't have stable housing, then relapse is imminent. Their mental health issues increase, their addictions increase because they have nowhere else to go and no one else to depend on."

He said his organization has reached out into the community and found that city residents "are very passionate about a homeless shelter."

We don't want to be a public eyesore, we don't want to be on Main Street," Owens said. "Somewhere tucked away at the edge of the city."

Clients would come into the shelter where, in addition to having access to food, a bed, and showers, they would be assessed and, for 45-60-days, receive the services of various religious programs and mental health providers. "Essentially, a one-stop shop for these people and an opportunity to go from have-not to back on their feet as productive citizens" and eventually find stable housing, he said. Ariel Johnson, the director of the MHC Warming Center and the co-chairman of the West Piedmont Better Housing Coalition, also discussed the need to better serve the city's homeless population by building a year-round shelter. She said the Warming Center served 76 guests during its 120 days of operation, from November to March. "We average 20 guests a night," she said, ranging in age from 6-months to 85-years-old. "This year saw more senior citizens than ever," she told council members. "Imagine the people that we miss the rest of the year. There is a need for some type of shelter that is year-round." Business owner Joe Martin, who operates What's Your Sign in uptown, said he supports the idea of a homeless shelter.

Students transport audiences to "a whole new world" in Disney's "Aladdin, Jr."



iunior School Logan Carter (right, foreground) and the cast of Martinsville **City Public Schools** Drama Club perform the song "Arabian Nights" from "Disney's Aladdin, Jr." The musical will be performed in the Martinsville High School auditorium April 1-3.

High

Martinsville

Callie Hietala Staff writer

"It is not what is outside that counts, but it is what's inside," Logan Carter's Genie says to an empty theater.

He and the rest of his cast mates are in the final weeks of rehearsal for Disney's "Aladdin, Jr." The play, set in the fictional Arabian kingdom of Agrabah, tells the story of a "diamond in the rough" named Aladdin who finds a magic lamp, befriends a genie, and ultimately learns that outward appearances matter less than what lies inside our hearts.

play. Rather, Aladdin has three human friends — Omar (Max Rorrer), Babkak (Alex Butler), and Kassim (Caesar Draper) - "that are there with him throughout the whole play."

Rajah, Jasmine's tiger companion in the movie, is one of the princess' handmaidens in the play, played by Jordan Foster.

The character Iago, a parrot in the film, also is a human in the stage production, said Eli Simpson, 17 and also a senior, who plays the show's villain Jafar. In this production, Iago, Jafar's companion, is played by Samson Ray.

Even the character of Jafar differs

It lacked energy, they said.

"Every single time, you have to give 110 percent," director Shauna Hines told the students. "You have to be the show you want to see." Hines is the division's coordinator of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math), CTE (career and technical education), and fine arts.

Other production staff members are music director Eric Becker, stage managers Lateisha Fuller and Sharon Millner, choreographer Karla Scales, master set builder Barry Dillard, and master artistic designer Emma Weatherly.

Hines and the rest of the staff give

Martin said he is "not so much a fan of the buying property from people that have dilapidated buildings. The comment referenced one of Towarnicki's earlier statements related to uptown revitalization, in which he

See **ARPA Funding**, page 4

Time capsule to be opened April 1



A time capsule embedded in the side of the old BB&T building on East Church Street will be opened at 11 a.m. on Friday, April 1.

The site was previously home to Piedmont Trust Bank.

According to an engraved stone block marking the location of the capsule, contained within is memorabilia from Piedmont Trust's 50th anniversary celebration. The opening date coincides with the 100th anniversary of the bank, and marks 50 years since the capsule was placed.

City Manager Leon Towarnicki said former employees of Piedmont Trust Bank in aparticular are invited to attend the opening ceremony to be recognized. The opening also is open to all members of the public. "We hope it's not an April Fool's joke," Towarnicki

said, "but if it is, we'll all be surprised at the same time."

The script is an abbreviated version of the Broadway adaption of "Aladdin," the Oscar-winning 1992 animated film produced by Disney. It will be performed by the Martinsville City Public Schools Drama Club students Friday, April 1 through Sunday, April 3 at the Martinsville High School auditorium.

Hayden Calfee, a 17-year-old junior at Martinsville High who plays Princess Jasmine, said there are some key differences between the stage production and the film that is familiar to many. For example, she said, the character of Abu, an animated monkey from the film, doesn't appear in the

somewhat between stage and screen, Simpson said. "It's not necessarily made prominent that Jafar is a sorcerer," he said. "There's one scene where he does an incantation, but nothing else."

One thing that remains the same, though, is the music. As Genie says in the show's opening number, "Agrabah is a place where everybody sings!

Just a few weeks before the curtain goes up on the first performance, the cast's singing was put to the test during a late afternoon rehearsal in the auditorium. School production staff were not happy with a just-completed run-through of the song "Prince Ali."

the cast a short break to refocus their energies, and then they're back on stage, trying it again, dancers waving brightly-colored flags in the background as actors sing about the wealth and majesty of the mysterious Prince Ali. They didn't nail it, but they got better.

One notable element about this "Aladdin Jr." cast is the wide gap in age between the oldest and youngest actors. High school students share the stage with middle and elementary school students which can be at once

See Aladdin, Jr., page 8

Martinsville's textile heritage celebrated at Founders Day

Callie Hietala Staff writer

Martinsville's legacy as the former sweatshirt capital of the world and the history of the once-thriving textile industry was celebrated last weekend at the MartinsvilleHenry County Historical Society's annual Founders Day celebration.

Will Pannill, the grandson of William Letcher Pannill, who opened the Pannill Knitting Company in 1925, addressed a crowd of more than 80 (many of whom were former employees of the textile industries) in the courtroom of the historic former Henry County courthouse, now the Heritage Center & Museum, about the history of some of the textile companies that were founded in Martinsville and Henry County.





Left, Will Pannill, the grandson of the founder of Pannill Knitting Company, recounted the histories of a number of the textile companies that opened in Martinsville and invited audience members to share stories and memories of their own. Right, Founders Day guests look at memorabilia brought in by former employees of the various textile companies.

See Textile Heritage, page 5



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)

Friday, March 25 and Saturday, March 26

VMFA on the Road will be at Piedmont Arts (215 Starling Avenue, Martinsville.) The program is a traveling art museum from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond that brings art to remote corners of Virginia by way of the Museum's Statewide Partners program. Visitors will be able to tour "A View from Home: Landscapes of Virginia."

Saturday, March 26

The Martinsville-Henry SPCA, the Martinsville City Police Department, and PetSense are partnering to host a microchip clinic from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at PetSense (240 Commonwealth Blvd. W, Martinsville.) The cost of a microchip and registration is \$10. Dogs must be on leashes and cats must be in carriers for the safety of the animal.

The Spencer-Penn Centre is hosting Painting with Genie beginning at 1 p.m. All supplies are provided. Pre-registration is required by calling (276) 957-5757. The cost is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members.

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

Sunday, March 27

The Spencer-Penn Centre 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, March 18. For more details or to register, call (276) 957-5757.

Monday, March 28

A COVID-19 vaccine clinic will be held at the Martinsville branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library from 10:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. and at Albert Harris Elementary School from 4-6 p.m. The vaccines will be administered free of charge for adults and children ages 5 and older.

Tuesday, March 29

The Basset Historical Center will feature music from the local country and gospel group the Southern Gentlemen from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. The program is free and open to the public. Masks will be required. A COVID-19 vaccine clinic will be held at the Bassett branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library from 10:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. and at Patrick Henry Elementary School from 4-6 p.m. The vaccines will be administered free of charge for adults and children ages 5 and older.

Friday, April 1 and Saturday, April 2

Fido's Finds, 119 East Main Street, Martinsville, is hosting a basement sale. Every sale benefits the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA. The sale will take place Friday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Call Fido's Finds for more information at (276) 656-1101.

Saturday, April 2

The Friends of the Blue Ridge Regional Library is hosting a book sale at the Martinsville Library (310 East Church Street) from 9:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. Proceeds will support the library system. A members only book sale will take place Friday, April 1 from 1-5 p.m.

Monday, April 4

The Martinsville City School Board will hold its regular school board meeting at 6 p.m. in council chambers of the Martinsville City Municipal Building (5 West Church Street).

Thursday, April 7

Piedmont Arts hosts the Earl White String Band, a mainstay of the oldtime, folk, and dance community for more than 45 years and one of the few Black Americans preserving and playing Appalachian old-time string band music. General admission tickets are \$20 and are available at Piedmont Arts and online at piedmontarts.org.

A caregiver support group will meet from 11 a.m. until 12 p.m. at the Spencer-Penn Centre. This free program facilitated by Good Samaritan allows those caring for a friend or loved one to share the rewards and challenges of caregiving while connecting with others who understand. Attendees will learn on managing stress.

Friday, April 8

Music Night at the Spencer-Penn Centre, with Travis Frye & Blue Mountain will play in Alumni Hall. Gate opens at 5 p.m. and music begins at 6:20. Admission is a \$5 donation. Social distancing will be required and masks when that is not possible. Concessions will be sold.

Saturday, April 9

members and \$25 for non-members. For questions or to register, call (276) 957-5757.

Tuesday, April 12

Horsepasture District Supervisor Debra Buchanan will host a community meeting at the Horsepasture Ruritan Building from 6-7:30 p.m. County Administrator Tim Hall, Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry, and VDOT Resident Engineer Lisa Hughes will attend.

Wednesday, April 13

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society is sponsoring its annual "Be a Part of History" blood drive in conjunction with the American Red Cross from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center and Museum. To schedule an appointment, visit redcrossblood.org or call/text John Phillips at (276) 806-5022.

Saturday, April 16

The Bassett Volunteer Fire Department will host a benefit breakfast from 6:30-10:30 a.m. All proceeds will benefit Brenner Children's Hospital.

Saturday, April 23

The Spencer-Penn Centre is hosting its 11th annual Pig Cookin' Competition from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. This free event includes a 'barnival,' vendors, cruise-in, silent auction, and more. BBQ will be available for purchase. Call the centre at (276) 957-5757 with any questions.

ONGOING

The Louise R. Lester Spay/Neuter Clinic is hosting wellness clinics every Tuesday. Clinics are by appointment only—no walk-ins will be accepted. Call (276) 638-7297 to schedule your appointment. Beginning in April, the clinics will be held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, rather than weekly.

The Martinsville-Henry County SPCA is hosting an adoption special through April 16. Adoption fees for all dogs 40 pounds and over are \$50. Come by Tuesday through Friday from 12-6 p.m. and Saturdays from 2-4 p.m. to find your furever friend.

Patrick & Henry Community College is organizing a virtual Leadership Learning Community! If you have leadership questions, P&HCC can connect you with answers through this virtual community. Participants have the opportunity to collaborate and brainstorm current, real-time challenges and successes with fellow leaders while learning from each other or gaining insights from professionals skilled in areas of concern.

Sessions will be held from 4-5 p.m. every other Wednesday through June 22. For more information or to register, visit ph.augusoft.net or call (276) 656-0260.

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

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

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

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

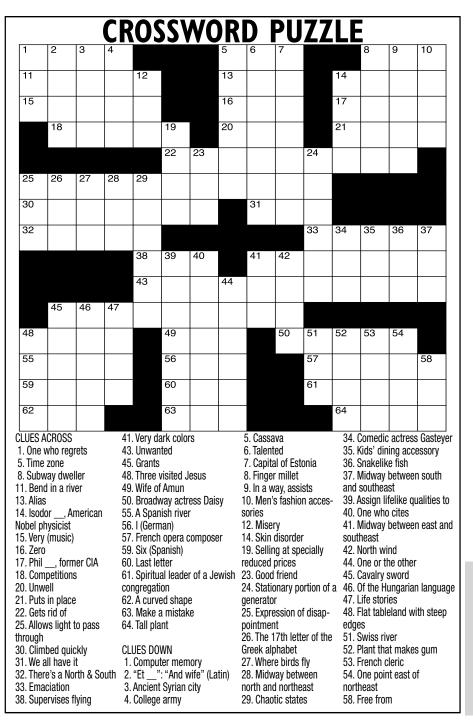
Call or text Ann Walker 276 732-0509 to see if you qualify.

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

See more news

at

The Spencer-Penn Center is hosting a spring grapevine floriculture/decorating workshop from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. Participants will create their own decorative grapevine wreath. Don't have a wreath? No worries! One can be purchased for \$10. All other supplies included. The cost is \$20 for www.henrycounty enterprise.com



Farm market program for seniors gears up for season

Beginning on Wednesday, April 6, the Southern Area Agency on Aging (SAAA), will take applications over the phone The Farm Market Program for Seniors, (also known as the Senior Farmer's Market

Nutrition Program).

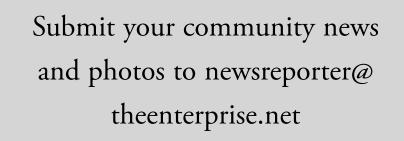
The SAAA will also continue to take applications throughout the following week(s), while the supply of coupons lasts.

Eligible seniors may receive \$45 worth of coupons that can be used to purchase locally-grown fresh fruits, vegetables and cut herbs at participating Farmer's Markets. The number of people who can participate is limited.

You may qualify to participate if: you are (or will become) 60 years of age or older on or before June 1, 2022, and you are a resident of Danville City, Martinsville City, Franklin County, Patrick County, Henry County or Pittsylvania County. (Note, residents of Henry and Pittsylvania counties must have access to and be willing to shop at participating Farmer's Market's outside of their county) and you do not live with and are not an immediate family member of the farmer who grows the produce, and you have a gross monthly household income that does not exceed the income requirements of the program. Note the income limit for this program changes from year to year. Individuals who have qualified for the program in the past may not qualify for this year's program.

Individuals and couples who wish to apply for coupons must contact Southern Area Agency on Aging at 276-632-6442 or toll-free at 1-800-468-4571. Applicants must be prepared to provide total gross household income information when applying over the phone or in person.

Southern Area Agency on Aging is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Local superintendents support call for a "seat at the table" in education policy discussions

Callie Hietala

Staff writer

The Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) is pushing back against the lack of discussion that occurred between state and school officials ahead of the creation of a 30-day report on critical race theory (CRT) and other divisive concepts in the classrooms.

The report, delivered to Gov. Glenn Youngkin and Secretary of Education Aimee Guidera by Superintendent for Public Instruction Jillian Balow, "rescinds certain policies, programs, and resources that promote discriminatory and divisive concepts as directed by Executive Order One."

In a letter to Balow written "on behalf of 133 public school division superintendents," Howard Kiser, the executive director of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS), said that those superintendents "believe gross assumptions have been made, without evidentiary support, in the development of the 30-day report."

VASS just wants a seat at the table to discuss some of these thoughts with the new (state schools) superintendent. That's it," said Martinsville City Public Schools Superintendent and VASS board president Dr. Zebedee Talley.

"We were not consulted and so we felt it was important to write that letter ... to express some of our thoughts," Talley said of the letter that was written after the VASS executive board and its officers met with Balow after she issued the report. At that meeting, board members "talked about some important instructional issues."

Balow reported that discriminatory and divisive concepts "have become widespread in the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and in Virginia school division," and that the department "will need to proactively review policies, practices, and pedagogies around the state to uphold the Civil Rights Act and comport with Executive Order One."

To that end, the report reflects that a number of resources related to educational equity have been removed or rescinded, specifically "all resources included on VDOE's EdEquityVA website, including EdEquityVA resources and resource repository." The report stated that "numerous resources within EdEquityVA employ the concept that current discrimination is needed to address past discrimination."

VDOE's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Audit Tool, "a main resource for EdEquityVA," was rescinded on Feb. 9, according to the report. "The guiding mission statement for the tool is, 'Education Equity is achieved when we eliminate the predictability of student outcomes based on gender, zip code, ability, socioeconomic status or language spoken at home," the report stated.

The report stated that Balow's office rescinded "all resources included on VDOE's culturally responsive website" which, according to the site, is geared toward "increasing the cultural proficiency of Virginia's educator workforce" under the premise that "culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and teachers bring to the instructional process, making culturally responsive educators necessary for the equitable achievement of today's increasingly diverse student population."

Also rescinded was a VDOE web series providing guidance for educators on a culturally responsive and inclusive commemoration of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The report stated the video was "rescinded 9/2/22 in response to public criticism." The video timestamp noted in the report marks a point in which the presenter said, "We are not going to reproduce a false assumption of Muslim responsibility for 9-11" and "we're also not going to use this space to reproduce anti-Muslim rhetoric." Other parts of the video discuss the impact of 9-11 commemorations on Muslim students who, according to the video, experience heightened anti-Muslim racism, threats, and bullying around those commemorations.

In his letter, Kiser asserted that "division superintendents

"to provide support for the success of children in underserved communities and in select population groups."

Further, he wrote that superintendents "disagree with your assumption that discriminatory and divisive concepts have become widespread in Virginia school divisions" without involving educators "in formulating that position or without having provided evidence to support that position."

The letter included several suggestions moving forward, including establishing a working group "which includes superintendent representatives from throughout Virginia and superintendents of color, to discuss the process, objectives, and data" that will be reflected in an upcoming 90-day report and "sharing draft VDOE positions/documents with division superintendents, when possible, prior to making those documents public" to build trust.

The letter also calls for the elimination of the tip line set up to allow parents to report divisive content to the Governor's office, saying that such a line "impedes positive relationships" between parents and educators.

The EdEquity materials rescinded by Balow "have been in place for years," Talley said. "School divisions have spent years, and we've worked with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for years spending time on this equity work to make sure all students get an opportunity to have a quality education. This was not done in silos. This was done throughout the state, all across the country in fact."

Talley said that work on equity in schools even reached back beyond former Gov. Northam's administration, though he added that "we've made good strides the past few years" when it became more of a focal point under Northam.

'Wouldn't you think that the superintendents who are in charge of implementing policy would be involved in this conversation" about rescinding materials, he asked. "We want to be part of the conversation.'

Talley said that, while not all 133 of the state's superintendents were directly consulted on the drafting of the letter, "came from the VASS board," which is elected by and therefore represents those administrators.

Patrick Čounty Schools Superintendent Jason Wood said that he did not receive a draft copy of the letter until the day before it was sent, but he noted "I'm not on that mailing list yet because I'm a new superintendent."

Wood received the letter from Henry County Schools Superintendent Sandy Strayer at a meeting of the region's superintendents because "during that meeting, I did not know what they were referring to" during discussions. Wood said that, while he "cannot deny the truth in that

letter - that we need more communication and collaboration in everything we do," he supported and "really believed strongly about" some of the provisions of Executive Order 1, particularly since "in Patrick County we feel we do not teach divisive concepts."

One such provision is "key language" calling for a review of curriculum, more transparency for parents, and things like that so they can know exactly what is being taught."

Another key point from the order Wood supports is "increasing adequate cultural competency training for staff so we can take out our own beliefs and teach students to be thinking for themselves. That's what we strive to do anyway. We differentiate our instruction to meet the needs of our learners and try to always strive to be equitable in all our decisions that we make because every student's different and needs different things."

Wood said that his division did not utilize the EdEquity materials provided by VDOE that have now been rescinded. Rather, "we provide that through a separate professional development program" and "a lot of internal trainings for our staff."

He noted "our school division's different than the next, and what we need is also different. We modeled our approach on what our students need in our specific locality."

the creation of the letter itself.

He said since beginning in his current post, he has attended three meetings of the region's superintendents, which are typically attended by a VASS representative. Wood said he was not aware of the letter being discussed or input solicited at any of those meetings. The meeting at which he was sent the letter by Strayer was the first time he heard about it.

Strayer said that VASS leadership "shared the letter with division superintendents just before sending it to the state superintendent," which is not a change in the way information of that sort had been communicated previously.

She said that some of her staff contributed to the work that was reflected in the now-rescinded EdEquity materials and noted that, even with those resources gone, equity continues to be a priority for her division. "In Henry County we strive to ensure that all learners are presented the opportunity to achieve success through differentiated and tiered supports," she said.

She said the division has spent decades focusing on differentiation and equity, dating back to 2001, when the division began a differentiation initiative. "Equity has been a huge part of that for us" in terms of expanding opportunities for students.

"I always say it's about the opportunities and experience students have while they're our students, and providing those meaningful educational experiences help prepare them to be successful learners and to impact our community and their world," a philosophy which she said is at the heart of her school division's strategic plan.

Strayer noted that school policy dictates political neutrality in subjects taught in the division. "We don't teach one side or the other and are very neutral with our delivery."

She supports the letter's call for a strong line of communication between VDOE and superintendents. "As an educator and as a citizen, I think communication and collaboration are the two essential components of success," she said. "We teach our children, and the workforce want our children to be efficient in communication and collaboration so as adults we need to model that."

Before the pandemic, Strayer said superintendent memos were distributed to keep superintendents abreast of statewide issues. Those memos became Zoom meetings during the pandemic. Balow, she said, had a meeting with the superintendents via Zoom, which is the only such meeting Strayer is aware of. "I think VASS may have met with the state superintendent more, but this is an opportunity for us all to change what works for all of us" and to open up more opportunities for communication.

In an email, Kiser said that Balow called him "shortly after receiving the letter on March 10. She also spoke briefly about the letter with her superintendent advisory council on March 11," a meeting he said he attended. "I also spoke with Secretary Guidera on March 14. The governor's office reached out to me on March 14 seeking clarification on the membership referenced in the letter."

Kiser said that he provided this statement in response to that inquiry:

While we did not poll all 133 superintendents who are part of our organization, we believe the letter represents the views of our membership as openness, transparency, and partnership are long-standing beliefs of our organization and key to ensuring every child in Virginia receives a great education."

He said both Guidera and Balow "have expressed a willingness to collaborate," but as of Monday he had "not received a plan as to how the communication with education stakeholders will proceed."

Kiser added that "Virginia superintendents have conversations in their regional meetings monthly on issues related to their work and issues of importance to the new state administration. The letter was written on behalf of the VASS membership, even though 133 division superintendents

and other stakeholder groups should have been consulted prior to the development of the 30-day report," and that superintendents "disagree with your having rescinded much of the Ed Equity work done" by VDOE which was intended

In addition to supporting more communication and collaboration between superintendents, educators, and state officials in discussions about instructional policy, Wood also urged greater communication between superintendents in were not polled.

However, he said, "I have received only positive feedback from the VASS membership and from many other educator stakeholders outside of VASS.²

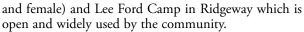
Anchor celebrates 50th year of service

The Anchor Commission is celebrating our 50th anniversary this year.

The agency that serves youngsters in Henry and Patrick counties and the City of Martinsville, was started by a committee of concerned citizens headed by Jane Bassett Spilman in April 1972. The first program of the newly formed organization was the Boys Group Home, which is still in operation today.

Over the years, programs at Anchor have included the Group Home for Girls (started in 1973), Foster Group Homes, Wilderness programs, Outreach Detention, Family Preservation, and the Youth Empowering Services (Y.E.S.) educational programs.

Currently, Anchor operates multiple youth centered programs. The Anchor Group Home and Shelter Care for boys (Shelter Care opened in 2020), Seven Challenges and Seven Challenges - Brief (Brief Challenges) which are both Evidence-Based substance use disorder programs specifically for adolescents (male and female), Aggression Replacement Training (A.R.T.) anger management training (male and female), Outreach Detention and GPS monitoring (male and female), the Transitional Day Program (T.D.P.) (male



"Anchor is planning celebration events this year and we would love to hear from any past residents or clients of Anchor programs who would like to share their experience at Anchor," said Ricky Walker, executive director of the organization. "We would also like to hear from any past board members or employees who would like to share their experience."

Email info@anchor-services.org or call (276) 634-2910.

The agency also expressed appreciation to a recent donor, Natalie Gongloff, for "her generous donation ... and we challenge the community to join her in financial support of Anchor as we celebrate our 50th anniversary year," the commission board said in a release.



Last year, Natalie Gongloff presented Ricky Walker, executive director of the Anchor Commission, with a \$5,000 donation to fulfill a goal she set for herself to give \$5,000 to a nonprofit in the memory of her infant son, Ty Allen Gongloff.



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OPINION The Lever Theory

There are some folks out there who would have you believe that gas prices fluctuate based on a wide variety of factors.

They say that gas prices are based on the laws of supply and demand, and that issues in the supply chain can cause prices to spike because it's more difficult to move crude oil to refineries or distribute refined gasoline.

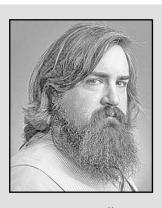
They say that oil companies are making record profits and high fuel prices are largely the result of corporate greed. They also say that prices vary depending on the season and the level of demand. They even say that the canceled Keystone XL pipeline was never intended to lower gas prices in America, but rather to bring Canadian crude oil into the U.S. so it could be refined and sold overseas, the profits of which would only have been to the benefit of oil companies and the politicians in their pockets.

However, I don't need a whole bunch of facts; I know what I feel. And I feel the answer is much simpler.

If history has proven anything, it's that seemingly complex situations always have a straightforward explanation. From the origins of World War I, to the true identity of Jack the Ripper, to the film "Rashomon," there's always an elegant, simple explanation that everyone can agree on. The same is true with gas prices.

And that is why I'm here today to tell you about The Lever Theory.

Few people know this, but somewhere on Theodore Roosevelt Island in the middle of the Potomac River, there is a small and unassuming brick building. If you step inside, you will be greeted by an elevator; there are no buttons, only a keyhole next to it. But if you happen to be the one person on Earth with the right key, you can ride that elevator 500 feet down, whereupon it opens



By Ben R. Williams

onto a room made of polished marble.

In the center of that room lies the Presidential Gas Price Lever.

It's a beautiful lever made from the finest gold, its handle wrapped in rich Corinthian leather. Etched into the floor at the lever's base are two words: "CHEAP" on one side, "EXPENSIVE" on the other.

When the President whom you may have guessed by now is the only one with the special key to gain access to this secret chamber — pulls upon the lever, gears mounted on the walls begin spinning crazily, and somewhere deep within the Earth, a steam whistle screams. By the time the President has returned topside, the damage has been done. His aides inform him of how much the price of gas has risen, or — more rarely — how much it has fallen.

What's most remarkable about the Presidential Gas Price Lever is that it doesn't just affect gas prices in the U.S.; it raises gas prices across the entire world! I'm not sure how this is possible, but my guess is that it has something to do with all those crazy spinning gears.

Many have wondered why the President so often uses the lever to raise gas prices when it brings him no benefit. Sometimes Presidents even raise gas prices when they're most in need of support, struggling in the polls and hoping to win re-election. It's a hard question to answer, but I guess when you see that big, beautiful lever staring at you, you just can't help but pull it.

Of course, many people don't

believe in the Presidential Gas Price Lever. They insist that the President has little impact on gas prices. They say that I'm making this whole thing up, and that when I put little stickers depicting the President pulling on a golden lever while shouting "I did this!" on gas pumps, I'm "ignorant" and "committing vandalism" and "making a gas station employee's life harder."

I don't believe it. They're probably in the pockets of Big Lever themselves.

You know, Isaac Asimov was a smart man with impressive sideburns. He once said the following:

"There is a cult of ignorance in the United States, and there has always been. The strain of anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that 'my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge."

Reading that quote today, you would almost think that Asimov was speaking directly to all the lever-doubters out there.

ARPA Funding from page 1

suggested the town could purchase and rehabilitate some of the uptown properties that have long sat unused.

"It seems to me off the bat that's rewarding people for bad behavior when there are ordinances that can take care of that if they're enforced," Martin said, and suggested at least \$2 million be directed to supporting small businesses that have suffered over the course of the pandemic and are still trying to recover.

During the height of the pandemic, "many small businesses were forced by the government to close their doors for extended periods of time, many of those businesses incurring losses of 75 percent or more" and others closing their doors for good, he said.

The losses suffered by those businesses "are immediate, they're real, and they're lasting," he said. "The funds in the hands of the city government are at least in part directly because of the suffering and the loss of our small businesses. They need our help to recover."

Martin requested that at least \$2 million be allocated to "direct financial relief to our many small businesses that are still fighting to survive in this economy." That amount could equate to "\$10,000 each for 200

That amount could equate to "\$10,000 each for 200 brick-and-mortar small businesses in Martinsville" to help with expansion or even just to keep the doors open for a few more months.

"It is the morally right thing to do and also makes economic sense," Martin said.

Aaron Rawls, who owns a bed and breakfast in Martinsville and is the founder of Oakdale Technology, said there is a "legacy issue" and a "nostalgia factor" among the long-time residents of Martinsville which he finds unfamiliar. "I think a lot of the community has struggled to shake that free," particularly as more new people without that sense of nostalgia move to the area.

Rawls made a number of suggestions, the first of which was hiring a marketing agency for the city. "I think we

is current to who we are and who we want to be."

"Marketing is not advertising," he clarified. Rather, it is engaging objective professionals in the exercise of "clearly defining who we are, how we can best present ourselves to the world, and getting that message to the people who want to hear it."

"I do not want to be known as the city of opioids and Mexican restaurant shootouts. I don't think any of us do," he said.

Rawls' second goal is the need to diversify the property owners in the city. He cited the current "monopolistic nature of property ownership" that creates a barrier to "new creative community members to come and join us."

He said the city has "way too many properties that are unkempt, run down, vacant, or unsalvageable," the most prominent of which are in uptown. Rawls recommended the city pursue updates to ordinances, tax structures, and zoning "to establish boundaries and standards for uptown property ownership."

Derrick Ziglar, who recently purchased Jefferson Plaza and the Setback Building, addressed the need to build infrastructure to support job creation and educational opportunities that would allow workers to find higherpaying jobs locally.

Tim Martin, owner of the Showroom, said he was a long-time member of Martinsville Uptown and has a long relationship with the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber Partnership for Economic Development (C-PEG). He said the organization that has long been in place "has worked for us," noting particularly the success of C-PEG's small business startup program. "I think we are in a position with what we already have in place to do it," he said.

Lisa Watkins, president of the Chamber of Commerce, said her organization is "looking forward to continuing to be good partners in the community" and "continuing to do uptown right now" to revitalize the area the funds "could make a substantial impact" in that effort.

Then, the funds were meant to be directed to the Uptown Partnership (UP). Now, he said, thinking has shifted toward creating a pot of money for grant-driven funding process, which would allow any uptown entity to apply. A committee would be formed to review applications and based on certain criteria, allocate those funds.

"We greatly appreciate the recommendations we have received here tonight," said Mayor Kathy Lawson, adding that many of the comments presented were ones she and other council members have previously heard from residents while out in the community.

"It is very important, as Pastor Whitfield said, to make sure that we don't take this money and then five years from now wonder, 'what did we do with it?"

She noted there were many factors for the city to consider in deciding how to allocate the money, including how it would serve the community as a whole.

Council member Danny Turner said council would need to evaluate how much money should be saved in case the reversion process is not successful. "We need to keep the cost of living low here," he said.

Towarnicki noted at the beginning of the meeting that the ARPA funding cannot be used to offset tax reductions and has certain deadlines by which the funds must be allocated and expended.

Council member Chad Martin said he wants people to "be careful about how people think about certain people who are saying they want to hear from the public and when they ran, they did not go door-to-door. I want people to realize this process is about people, not about politics. People can say what they want about politics, but this process is about caring about what the people actually want."

Pearson, who, along with council Martin, attended the eeting via phone, said she was "still quite conce about the process being followed. "It's difficult for me to vote on something when we don't have details, numbers, specific components. I am still suggesting we follow a more stringent, more holistic process.' She cautioned that if such a process is not followed, "and we continue to go through these bits and pieces, before you know it, we are going to be down to zero. We are already below the \$10 million level just with what we've approved thus far." Two more of Pearson's suggestions are being used as well. Towarnicki said an email address, arpa@ci.martinsville. va.us, was created specifically to receive further input on the funding. A survey will be posted on the city's website for residents to offer further input. After the input session, the council unanimously approved using \$700,000 of the funds for two projects -\$200,000 for stormwater repairs, and \$500,000 to address funding issues with two ongoing affordable housing proj-

need to rehabilitate our brand but also build a brand that



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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 the work that needs to be done to improve our entire city."

"How willing is the chamber to work with all organizations and do what they need to do," Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles asked. Watkins replied the organization is ready to partner "with any organization that's willing to work with us."

The Rev. Charles Whitfield, of Charis Transportation, said, "I would hate for us to spend this money and Martinsville will still reflect that we never had it. I think we're skating over the true blight and trying to cover it with lights. There are still systemic problems with youth, with addiction, with homelessness, with small business challenges that I don't want us to overlook," he said.

City Manager Leon Towarnicki previously shared a list of potential ARPA-funded projects proposed by staff for council's consideration. The items on the list, he said, consisted of both previously-discussed projects and others that the city would not normally have been able to fund within the normal budgeting process. It was compiled, he said, from discussions and needs identified at previous council meetings, neighborhood meetings, and annual budget reviews. He previously stated that the list also was based on input from other city staff and suggestions from various members of the community who had reached out with ideas.

Towarnicki said that the city was allocated \$15,463,451 in funding which much be committed by the end of 2024 and expended by the end of 2026. Use of the funds is restricted, Towarnicki said. The money can go toward COVID-19 related expenses, such as helping offset negative economic impacts of the pandemic, providing premium pay for essential workers, and can be invested in infrastructure such as water, sewer, and broadband, among other uses.

The money cannot, Towarnicki said, be used to directly or indirectly offset tax reductions, nor can it be deposited into any pension funds.

At its last meeting, council members voted 4-1 to approve 6 projects: the Summit View water line project, Southside Ballpark and restrooms and upgrades, city-wide park improvements, an upgrade to MGTV, upgrades and renovations to Hooker Field, and a \$50,000 contribution to Piedmont Arts' capital campaign.

The public input session on the funding was approved in a 4-1 vote at council's March 8 meeting on a motion by Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles. At an earlier meeting, council member Tammy Pearson, who was the sole no vote on the motion to hold the session, called for more public input on how the funding should be spent. Pearson argued that she wanted council to solicit input by "going out more into the community" rather than asking residents to come to council chambers to speak.

During Tuesday's meeting, Towarnicki seemed to suggest one of Pearson's suggestions on public involvement was being considered. The original version of the list included \$4.5 million in funding for uptown revitalization. Towarnicki explained that city officials proposed such a large amount because "there's a lot of work going on in In other matters, the council:

*Read and presented a proclamation acknowledging March as Red Cross Month.

*Presented funds to Martinsville native George Metz, who recently returned from helping drive refugees from Ukraine. Metz said he transported 112 people across the Ukrainian border, and plans to return in April to continue providing assistance.

*Read and presented proclamations recognizing recent winners from the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Blue Ridge who participated in US Cellular's Black History Month Art Contest. The first place winner was Judith Tuttle, Layce Everhart came in second, while Zy'Jerryah Martin placed third.

*Read and presented a proclamation recognizing week of April 3-9 and National Library Week.

*Read and presented a proclamation recognizing Martinsville High School football coach Bobby Martin.

*Read and presented a proclamation recognizing the 75th anniversary of the Martinsville Speedway.

*Read and presented a proclamation recognizing the third week of March as Emergency Management Professionals Week in Virginia.

*Read and presented a proclamation recognizing the month of April 2022 as Martinsville's Bee City Month.

*Heard a presentation from Building Official/Zoning Administrator Kris Bridges on the rental inspection program. Conducted a public hearing and subsequently approved a resolution adding 3 properties to the program. The properties are 706 Spruce Street, 203 Greyson Street, and 818 Starling Avenue. All were added on a finding that, for each property, there is a need to protect the public health, welfare, and safety of the occupants of that individual dwelling unit, and the unit is both blighted and in the process of deteriorating. Bridges acknowledged that some property owners have indicated plans to sell the properties, but if they become rental properties again, they will remain in the program. He also said some of the issues were tenantdriven, rather than owner-driven.

Supervisors allocate sales tax money to school board

Callie Hietala

Staff writer

Members of the Henry County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday unanimously approved a motion to allocate 100 percent of revenues from a recent 1 percent sales tax increase to future construction, renovations, and improvements of school facilities.

Vice Chairman Joe Bryant, of the Collinsville District, made the motion that was seconded by Ryan Zehr, of the Ridgeway District.

Bryant's motion also included replacing \$2.6 million in the budget previously appropriated for school debt with money from the general fund reserve funds.

The action came after the Henry County School Board sent a letter to the supervisors requesting the return of \$2.6 million in proceeds from a 1 percent sales tax increase that was earmarked to help fund school construction and improvement projects.

Though the section of the Code of Virginia allowing for the tax increase specified that "revenues from this tax shall be used solely for capital projects for new construction or major renovation of schools," the county opted to allocate some of the proceeds to pay down debt from previous school construction and improvement projects.

In December, then-Attorney General Mark Herring issued an opinion stating that the revenues from the additional tax should be used to fund capital projects for new construction or major renovation of schools and not for debt mitigation.

At the time, the attorney general's website noted that the opinions issued by that office "are not legally binding" but "are frequently relied on by courts and members of the General Assembly, in addition to the officials to whom they are addressed."

"That money belongs to us," said school board member Ben Gravely when the school board voted to send the letter. "That money is owed. They should give us our money."

"I think that today says we want to work with our school board on situations" and maintain a positive and collaborative relationship, said supervisor chairman Jim Adams, of the Blackberry District, after the vote.

"I think it was handled very well," said school board chairman Thomas Auker. "I think both sides understood the importance of these funds for the schools. Especially when it comes to improving the school buildings and so forth, we need that money in order to be able to do that. I commend the Board of Supervisors for unanimously approving it."

Vice chairman Teddy Martin said he was "glad the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to return the 1 percent sales tax to the school board for new construction and renovations in accordance with the Attorney General's opinion, the law, and the will of the voters in the referendum. As I was inspired to run for the school board by the need for capital improvements and as President of the VSBA (Virginia School Board Association), this has been a very important matter to me, our board, and school boards and officials across the Commonwealth. I look forward to working collaboratively with our local appropriating body in the future to make our community the best place to live, work, and raise a family."

"I think they did the right thing," said school board member Francis Zehr, of the Ridgeway District, who initially made the motion to send the letter to the supervisors.

Since the proposal constitutes a change of more than one percent of the current budget, the supervisors set a public hearing for April 26 at 6 p.m. to receive public input on the adjustment.

In other matters, the board:

*Unanimously approved a proclamation celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Martinsville Speedway and unveiled a new, temporary logo incorporating the anniversary which will be used in marketing efforts for Henry County and the Martinsville Speedway.

*Unanimously approved an additional appropriation of \$300,000 received from the Virginia Department of Health's Virginia School Screening Testing for Assurance (ViSSTA) program. The funds will be used for expenses related to testing and communication regarding COVID-19.

*Presented a proclamation to the Blue Ridge Regional Library Board of Visitors recognizing April 3-9, 2022, as National Library Week.

*Unanimously approved an appropriation of \$1,036,250 from the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program for site work on lot #2 at the Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre. The funds will be used to clear timber from the site and prepare grading design plans.

*Unanimously approved an appropriation of \$357,741 from the Virginia Tobacco Commission for site work at the Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre. The funds will be used for grading and development of lot #5.

*Unanimously approved an appropriation of \$414,993 from the contingency and carryover funds to replace the roof on the Henry County Recreation Center and awarded a contract of \$567,000 to JT Morgan Roofing, Inc. The rest of the funds will come from a previous allocation for the same project earlier in the fiscal year.

*Unanimously approved the awarding of a contract to EMS Management and Consultants, Inc. of Winston-Salem, NC for emergency medical services billing.

*Unanimously approved an additional appropriation totaling \$414,993 from the contingency and carryover funds and approved awarding the contract of \$567,000 to JT Morgan Roofing, Inc. of Roanoke, VA, for the replacement of the roof.

*Held a public hearing and unanimously approved changes to the magisterial districts proposed by the Redistricting Committee during the board's regular Feb. meeting.

*Unanimously approved a rezoning request of



Debra Buchanan, of the Horsepasture District (left), and Ryan Zehr, of the Ridgeway District (right), presented a proclamation to Clay Campbell (center) honoring the 75th anniversary of the Martinsville Speedway.

approximately 3.4 acres at 902 Eggleston Falls Road in the Ridgeway District from suburban residential to agricultural. The applicant wishes to build additional accessory buildings on the property.

*Held a public hearing and approved a resolution in support of a Community Development Block Grant proposal for the Fieldale Heritage Revitalization Project.

*Approved a proclamation declaring April 3-9, 2022, as National Library Week.

*Approved a proclamation establishing March 2022 as Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month in Henry County.

*Approved a resolution supporting the addition of Buckingham Terrace to the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) secondary road system.

*Recognized the winning teams of Henry County Parks and Recreation's winter sports.

*Heard from Andrew Barker, a farmer in Axton, who requested the board change its current density policy regarding solar farms to allow for more solar development.

*Heard from Andrew Hines, of the Iriswood District, who expressed his disappointment with the funding of the school division. He said Henry County schools rank next-to-last in terms of funding received by locality.

*Heard from a Vietnam combat veteran who asked the board to pass a resolution to fly the POW/MIA (prisoner of war/missing in action) flag under American flags flying throughout the county.

*Heard from Joyce Staples about diversity in hiring. She said while she was not opposed to Dale Wagoner becoming the next County Administrator upon Tim Hall's retirement, she wanted to "put a spotlight on an inequitable and unjust" hiring process which has appointed a series of white, male county administrators without opening the job up to a public application process.

Textile Heritage from page 1

Pannill shared brief histories of companies like Dupont. Executives chose to open a plant in Martinsville in 1941 due to the "human factor," Pannill said. Those charged with selecting a location "reported stability in every phase of community life." The plant, Pannill said, made nylon fiber and yarns, including producing yarn for parachutes during World War II.

Fieldcrest Mills (later Fieldcrest Cannon) and the town of Fieldale, Pannill told the audience, was built by the Marshall Field and Company at the turn of the century. "They built a post office, hotel, two churches, a barber shop, a commuthermostats and put on their sweats."

Another factor was the growing popularity of UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) sweatshirts overseas. Pannill said that, though most European and other foreign buyers had no idea what UCLA was (he said many pronounced it as a word, Ucla, rather than an acronym), the iconic sweatshirt was purchased in droves. The popularity of that logo "is really what got sweatshirts going in Europe and it caused a real craze," he said.

Pannill said the 1970s film "Flashdance" also helped the sweatshirt industry.

nity center with two pools, a drug store, produce store, theater, and a bank" and provided low-rent housing to their employees. Fieldcrest Cannon was purchased in 1997 by Pillowtex Corporation, which closed in 2003, Pannill said.

He also discussed Jobbers Pants Factory, which he said opened in 1933 in the Spencer Brothers Tobacco Factory on Fayette Street in Martinsville. A second plant opened in an old tobacco building on Adele Street and a third on Elizabeth Street. "The plan specifically opened to employ black women in 1936," he said, and added that by 1939, the more than 1,000 women employed there produced 1,200 pairs of pants a day.

Pannill discussed a number of other textile manufacturing companies that established themselves in Martinsville and Henry County, highlighting the impressive number of plants that provided jobs for many in the area, including the Virginia Underwear Corporation, Hampton-Wrenn Inc., the Pannill-Walker Underwear Company, Lacy Manufacturing, and Pluma Inc.

One of the histories Pannill recounted was that of his grandfather. William Letcher Pannill, he said, was born in 1880 in North Carolina and went to work at the Mayo Cotton Mill in Mayodan, N.C. at the age of 23. "He had a photographic memory and a phenomenal understanding of complicated machinery," Pannill said, adding that his grandfather was sent north to Utica Knitting Mills, which made long underwear, to learn the intricacies of that process.

Eventually, Pannill began his own knitting operation, but left when P.H. Hanes of Winston-Salem, N.C., offered him a job as superintendent of the P.H. Hanes Knitting Company.

He soon realized that "making long underwear in the south from southernmade yarn could easily compete with the northern knitting mills using the same yarn," Pannill told Sunday's audience. He said his grandfather chose Martinsville to open his new plant in part because his soon-to-be wife was from nearby Spencer, and because "the wives of the men working in the furniture factories would make excellent sewing machine operators and it would give them a good sense of pride."

Pannill purchased a building on the corner of Cleveland Avenue and Water Street from the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, which had recently closed a plant at that location. There, he opened Pannill Knitting Company. The company was sold to Sarah Lee Knit Products, owner of the Hanes brand, in 1990.

However, Pannill's impact on the textile industry in the area extended further than one company. Sale Knitting (later Tultex) was opened by Pannill in 1937 in a building on Moss Street in Martinsville. Mike Sale, Pannill's son-in-law, was the company's first president.

Sale Knitting, Will Pannill said, "was the first of 3 companies to make sweatshirts and the first company in the south to do so."

By the 1930s, he said crewneck sweatshirts had become hugely popular, but companies in Connecticut and New York had monopolies on the products. Pannill challenged that monopoly by setting up a sweatshirt division of his own.

The company, which eventually changed its name to Tultex, ceased operations in 1999, Pannill said.

The Pannill name is associated with the founding of the Bassett Walker Knitting Company as well, according to Sunday's talk. Samuel Stanhope Walker came to Martinsville after serving in the military during WWI and, with help from Pannill, started Virginia Underwear Corporation (later Walker Knitting Company) in a building on Cleveland Avenue built by Pannill.

Eventually, the company merged with Bassett Knitting in Bassett and became the Bassett-Walker Knitting Company.

Pannill said the sweatshirt producers in Martinsville "enjoyed friendly competition for many years," employing thousands of people in Martinsville and Henry County. The companies even had bowling and softball teams for both men and women, Pannill said.

He told the audience that several factors led to a rise in the sale of sweatshirts in the 1970s, including an energy crisis which caused people to "turn down their

The film features a character who cuts the sleeves and rib neck from a sweatshirt. "U.S. girls went crazy," Pannill said. With pastel colors (or "ice cream colors") also growing in popularity, women wanted sweatshirts in pink, mint, lemon yellow, aqua, and more. "All the girls had to have them all," he said.

Then, after years of continued growth of the industry, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took effect in 1994, he said, and recalled that "Ross Perot once referred to NAFTA as a 'giant sucking sound.' "Since 2001, over 3.2 million Americans have lost their jobs to China, Southeast Asia, or Mexico. Many of them were in Martinsville, Henry County, and the surrounding area," he said.

Though the textile industry has largely left Martinsville and Henry County, the memories of that prosperous period remain. A number of those in the audience shared their stories and memories of the industry.

One man, who said he was in the furniture business during the textile boom, recalled that his company always had a good association with Pannill. "Those (Pannill employees) who worked for 50 years got a free grandfather clock," he recalled. "I know at least 10, because I delivered 10 of them," he said.

Another, who said he was a quality control manager at a Pannill plant, recalled that at one point, a company had a government contract to provide sweatshirts and sweatpants for the military.

Rusty Lacy, whose father Frank founded Lacy Manufacturing, spoke about how many of the people who owned the various companies were intertwined. Mike Sale, he said, saw the need for a "cut and sew" operation (rather than knitting) and convinced Lacy, who at the time worked at Martinsville High School, "to give all that up and start this business from scratch."

Lacy recalled his father telling stories about going downtown to buy a cheap nylon jacket and ripping it apart to make patterns. "Back then, he (Frank) said you couldn't buy zippers because all the metal was going to the war effort, so all the jackets had buttons instead."

"It's important to know this history," said Historical Society board member Andy Doss at the close of the talk. "I know there's a lot of sadness to it as well, but this is what made us what we are right now. We have to take what that was and figure out how to make the best of what came out of that."

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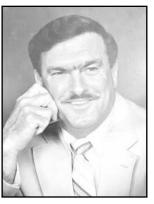
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OBITUARIES

Ronald Jay McCambridge Daniel "Dan" Wayne Pritt

Ronald Jay McCambridge, 83, of Collinsville, VA passed away Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at his home. He was born November 18, 1938, in Hiwassee, VA to the late Luther Douglas McCambridge and Fannie Bell Quesenberry McCambridge. He was also preceded in death by his identical twin, Donald McCambridge; brothers, Marvin McCambridge,

Everett McCambridge, and LeRoy McCambridge; and sisters, Brenda Looney and Irene Mabry. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Frances Franklin McCambridge; sons, Jeff McCambridge (Kathy) and Myron McCambridge (Niki); grandchildren, Kelcey Rigney (Tyler),



Sarah McCambridge, Nick McCambridge, and Collin McCambridge; and sister, Kay Phillips.

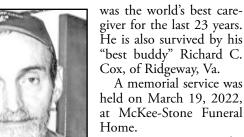
Mr. McCambridge worked for VA Department of Highways in Franklin County as inspector on the four-lane road from Henry County to Roanoke. He retired from DuPont when the plant closed and was a sergeant in the Army.

The funeral was on March 19, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville Chapel, with Rev. Raymond Moorefield officiating. Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, VA is serving the McCambridge family. Online condolences may be made at norrisfuneral. com. Daniel "Dan" Wayne Pritt, 64, of Ridgeway, Va. passed away on March 15, 2022.

He was born May 1, 1957, in Philadelphia, Pa. to the Leland Pritt and Naomi Haddix Pritt.

In addition to his parents, he was also preceded in death by three brothers, Charles, Ronald, and Timothy Pritt.

He is survived by one brother, Jim Pritt (Phyllis) of New Salem, PA and several nieces and nephews. Dan



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

To express condolences online, visit www.collinsmckeestonemartinsville.com.

John Kenneth Collins Sr.

John Kenneth Collins Sr., 66, of Martinsville, VA, passed away on Thursday, March 17, 2022. He was born in Richmond, VA on October 20, 1955, to Herbert Payne Collins, Sr. and Catherine Ann Collins.

John is survived by his wife, Marcia Collins of Martinsville, VA; son, John Collins (Katie), granddaughter, Emily Jane Collins, and grandson,

James Hampton Collins of Purcellville, VA; daughter, Nicole Collins of Raleigh, NC; brother, Herb Collins, Jr. (Ruth Anne) of Martinsville, VA; brother, David Collins (Rosa) of Martinsville, VA; and sister, Mary Paige McElroy (Paul) of Huntsville, AL.

Because he had a larger-than-life personality and gave the best bear hugs, "Big John" will also be sorely missed by a host of cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

John was preceded in death by his father in 2007 and his first wife, Laura Tramel Collins, in 2011.

After graduating from Martinsville High School and then Virginia Tech, John, along with his brothers, was coowner of Fibre Container Company, Inc. His infectious smile, golf swing and innate ability to connect with others made him a solid Vice President of Sales for more than 30 years. In fact, he and his brothers, friends and customers played in numerous golf tournaments together, and won their fair share.

Outside of work, John was a longtime member of First Baptist Church of Martinsville where he sang in the choir, taught Sunday School, and assisted as a Deacon. He served numerous terms as Deacon Chair, in addition to chairing the Early Learning Center, Business and Finance, and Personnel Committees.



The Martinsville-Henry County community was very important to John, and his dedicated service will be greatly missed. He was a natural leader and welcomed the opportunity to take charge. John was the current president of Habitat for Humanity, past board member and President of Chatmoss Country Club, past volunteer with

the local American Heart Association, MARC Workshop, Boys and Girls Club of Martinsville and Henry County, and a past board member and President of Grace Network of Martinsville and Henry County.

John was known for his baritone voice that joyfully filled whatever room he entered. He was also known for being one of the first to join the dance floor when the music started. He used these skills to not only charm family and friends but to support the community through the Smith River Singers and the Piedmont Arts' Dancing for the Arts.

Still, his love of music, the community and the Hokies couldn't compare to his love for his friends and family who gathered at the First Baptist Church for a memorial service on Thursday, March 24, 2022.

Memorials may be made to Martinsville and Henry County Habitat for Humanity, 932 Starling Ave, Martinsville, VA 24112, SPCA of Martinsville-Henry County, 132 Joseph Martin Hwy, Martinsville, VA 24112, or Grace Network of Martinsville-Henry County, P.O. Box 3902, Martinsville, VA 24112.

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

George Jackson "Jack" Martin

George Jackson "Jack" Martin, 78, of Collinsville, passed VA away Wednesday, March 16, 2022, at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. He was born April 15, 1943, in Bassett, VA to the late James Albert Martin and Vergie Hale Martin. He was also preceded in death by his brothers, Paul, Loyd, Maynard, and Mickey Martin.

Jack graduated from Martinsville High School in 1962 where he excelled in basketball and football. He attended Patrick Henry Community College (UVA Extension) in 1963. His career began at the A & P Supermarket and resumed at DuPont for seven years. After a short stint in self-employment, Jack began a successful career in the insurance business, where he worked until retirement.

Jack belonged to Eden, NC Moose Club, Elks Club of Martinsville, and was a 32nd degree Mason in #152 Masonic



Lodge, Martinsville, as well as serving as President of the Shriners Club locally. Jack was President of the Martinsville-Henry County Insurance Organization, Martinsville-Henry County Life Underwriters Association, and was chosen as "Man of the Year." Jack additionally became an LUTC1 and LUTC2, as well as LUTCF.

He is survived by his children, Tammy Martin, Todd Martin (Janet), Brian Martin, Robert Alexander (Mae), and Pokey; brother, Bill Martin; five grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and caregiver, Janet Martin. A memorial service was held on Thursday, March 24, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville Chapel. Pastor Michael Harrison officiated. Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville, VA is serving the Martin family. Online condolences may be made at norrisfuneral.com.

Greta Doyle Dalton

Greta Doyle Dalton, age 87, of the Horsepasture community, passed away on Monday, March 21 at Brighton Gardens Assisted Living Facility in Winston Salem, N.C. She is survived by her only son, Chris Dalton (Suzette), and granddaughters, Sydney Dalton & Lyndsey D. Evans (Cory). She was predeceased by her loving husband, Bobby Dalton in 2015, and by her parents, Howard & Oberia Doyle. Greta served the Lord faithfully for more than 50 years by playing the organ at Horsepasture Christian Church each week. She loved her church and her church family. She also served the church for a number of years by serving as part time church secretary. Greta graduated from Spencer Penn High School in 1952, along with her husband Bobby. They had met in grade school and were married in 1956. They went through life hand in hand until his death in 2015. Anyone that knew Greta, knew her great love for her family especially her two granddaughters. She loved making them feel special and spent many hours playing dress up or attending soft-



ball games, pee-wee cheerleading, dance recitals and finally volleyball matches. Her obsession with cats also was well known. For years, she spoiled each cat she had, and was deeply saddened when they passed. Greta will be great-

ly missed. She was a wonderful wife, mother, and loving grandmother. We rejoice in knowing she is in the Arms of Jesus and

is now reunited with her beloved Bobby.

Visitation will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday, March 25, 2022, at Horsepasture Christian Church. The funeral will be held at 1 p.m. on Friday, March 25, 2022, at Horsepasture Christian Church, with Pastor Kyle Thompson officiating. Burial will be at Horsepasture Christian Church Cemetery.

We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the

Lord. 2 Cor 5:3

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

James Michael Davis

James Michael Davis, 73, of Martinsville, VA, passed away on Friday, March 18, 2022. He was born on January 11, 1949, to the late Campbell Leonard Davis and Mary Mildred Martin Grindstaff. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brothers, Kenneth Davis, and Larry Davis.

Mr. Davis worked as a

teacher at Carver and Magna Vista High Schools for 35 years. He was a loving husband, devoted father, and an avid bowler.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn Bell Davis; son, Reverend Andrew Davis (Gretchen Davis) of Escondido, CA;

sister, Dana Nahstoll of Richmond, VA; brother, George Davis of Martinsville, VA; and grandchildren, Hunter Davis, and Anne Davis. A graveside service was held on March 22, 2022, at Roselawn Burial Park, with Rev. Andrew Davis officiat-

h pallbearers.

Memorial donations may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

ing. The Martinsville/

Henry County Hall of

Fame Bowlers served as

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

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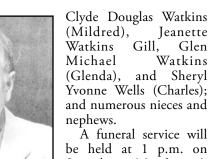
Donnie Gene Watkins

Donnie Gene Watkins, 72, of Martinsville, VA passed away Monday, March 21, 2022, at his home. He was born August 5, 1949, to the late Clyde Benjamin Watkins and Annie Mae Purdy Watkins. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his siblings, Robert Jackson Watkins, Maynard Davis Watkins, Evaline Watkins

Brannen, George William Watkins, Eunice Burnette, Gladys Sheffield, Deborah Lorene Watkins Price, and Pauline Watkins Jones.

Mr. Watkins attended Stanleytown's Amazing Grace Baptist Church and was a member of White's Chapel. He served in the Army and was owner/operator of Watkins Construction.

He is survived by his siblings,



A runeral service will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 26, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville Chapel, with Pastor Dr.

Greg Hodges and Pastor Jim Hodges officiating. Visitation will be from 5 to 7 p.m. on Friday, March 25, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services and other times at the home. Burial will be at White's Chapel in Ridgeway, VA.

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

CLASSIFIEDS

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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FERRUM COLLEGE Farm Museum Interpreter (Seasonal)

Ferrum College is seeking outgoing Museum Interpreter's to work with visitors at the Blue Ridge Institute & Museum's (BRIM) living history farm museum. The primary duties of the interpretive staff are to greet visitors; to guide them through the museum facilities; to talk about various aspects of local history and culture; to demonstrate life in the 1800's by carrying out household, farm, and garden tasks; and to assist visitors in hands-on educational activities of the period. BRIM interpreters usually wear period costumes during farm tours and some other museum events. The BRIM provides costumes and training. The Farm Museum Interpreter position is seasonal (primarily April through October). The work schedule varies, and some weekend work is required. A qualified candidate must be able to communicate effectively with visitors of all ages and must have the ability to learn and carry out 1800-period lifestyle tasks such as open-hearth cooking, handcrafts, heirloom

HELP WANTED

gardening, and heritage breed farm animal feeding. Interested candidates should submit an application or resume to Human Resources, Ferrum College, P.O. Box 1000, Ferrum, VA 24088 or e-mail to resumes@ferrum.edu. Background check required. This institution is an equal opportunity

provider and employer.

PATRICK & HENRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Patrick & Henry Community College in Martinsville, VA has the following job openings: Physical Therapist Assistant Faculty/Program Director, Building and Grounds Technician, Workforce Grants Specialist, Workforce Grants Advisor, Science Lab Assistant, MHC After 3 Program Leader, MHC After 3 After School Instructor, and Adjunct Faculty in Communication Studies (Speech)- Patrick County and Main Campus Sites, English, Mechatronics, NCCER Plumbing, Nursing, and Welding. For details and application information please visit http:// patrickhenry.edu/, scroll to the bottom of the page, and click on Employment Opportunities. Patrick & Henry Community College is an Equal Opportu-

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nity 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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office: 967 Fairystone Lake Drive Stuart, VA 24171



Competitive exhibit packet available for fair entries

The competitive exhibit packet is released for the Henry County Fair. The Competitive Exhibit Packet has been released for the various contests that will be held at the 2nd annual Henry County Fair, presented by VisitMartinsville.

The competition will offer a variety of categories, each offers a chance to win fair ribbons and prizes. Categories include fresh fruits and vegetables, canned fruits, canned vegetables and meats, pickles and relishes, bread, candy, pies, flowers and plants, quilts, crocheting, knitting and textiles.

The Competitive Exhibit Contests are sponsored by Bryant Radio in Collinsville.

"These contests are a staple feature of many county fairs across the country,

and will give people in our region the opportunity to showcase their agricultural, homemaking and crafts skills", said Roger Adams director of Parks and Recreation for Henry County and also the director of the Henry County Fair.

The packet with the rules, categories and registration form can be download at www.HenryCountyVaFair.com/special-events, or picked up at the Henry County Parks and Recreation Office.

The Henry County Fair will be held September 21 – 24 on the grounds at Martinsville Speedway, and will lead into the ValleyStar Credit Union 300 race at Martinsville Speedway on September 24. For more information, contact the Henry County Parks and Recreation Office at (276) 634- 4640 or visit www.henrycountyvafair.com.

City students win geography contest

Students in Beverly Woody's class at Martinsville Middle School participated in the Geography Bee Finals.

To compete in the final round today, students had to pass two eliminations.

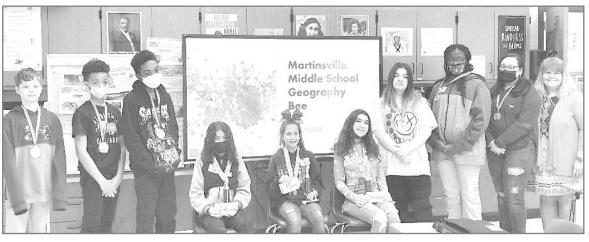
The first required students to label all the continents and oceans on a blank map. In the second, students were required to name all the state capitals and label all the states on a blank map and get at least 80 percent correct.

Winners of the Geography Bee are:

1st- Abbigail Campbell, \$25 prize,

2nd-Leonardo Hernandez-Mata, \$15 prize, 3rd- Lilly Rorrer, \$10

prize.



Carson Cole, Josiah Lucas, Lacario Gray, Leonardo Hernandez-Mata, Abbigail Campbell, Lilly Rorrer, Keira Tatum, Zaina Talley, Angeliah Eccles, Martinsville Middle School teacher Beverly Woody.



Walter Thomas Pollard, Jr.

Walter Thomas Pollard, Jr., 74, of Martinsville, VA passed away on Monday, March 14, 2022. He was born on May 2, 1947, to the late Walter Thomas Pollard, Sr., and Inez King Pollard.

After attending Virginia Tech, Walt worked as a chief clerk at Norfolk Southern Railroad for more than forty-two years. He continued to be a collec-

tor and admirer for all things railroad throughout his life. He loved watching sports, history, collecting coins, golf, and a good scotch. Of all his loves and interests, Walt loved his wife, family, and baby dogs the best.

He is survived by his wife, Donna Huff Pollard; son, Walter Thomas Pollard, III



(Donna Stanley); daughter, Terry Morris (Chris); three sisters, Sandy Dyer (Joey), Ruby Thomas, and Karen McClintock (Clay); and grandson, Jarod Morris (Moriah). Also surviving are lots of nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held March 19, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville Chapel.

Memorials may be made to Granberry United

Methodist Church, 200 Granberry Road, Martinsville, VA 24112 or to the SPCA of Martinsville-Henry County, 132 Joseph Martin Hwy, Martinsville, VA 24112.

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

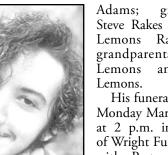
Isaac Sean Rakes

Isaac Sean Rakes, 18 of Stuart, Virginia, passed away March 20, 2022. He was born on November 8, 2003 to Terry Stump and Ashley Rakes. Isaac was a Senior at Patrick County High School. He was a member of Pride of Patrick County Honor Band, and he attended Five Forks Wesleyan Church. Isaac had enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps

through the delayed entry program.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Virginia and Larry Stump.

In addition to his parents, he is survived by step-mother, Dewonna Stump; a sister, Jada Stump; brother, Marshall



grandparents, Steve Rakes and Rhonda Lemons Rakes; Great grandparents, Robbie Richard Lemons and

His funeral will be held Monday March 28, 2022, at 2 p.m. in the chapel of Wright Funeral Service, with Pastor Mike Fain officiating. Burial will be in the Lemons family cemetery. The family will

receive friends from noon until time of service.

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

FROM THE FAMILY OF SHELDON DREW CAPPS

February 3, 1993-February 22, 2022

With heartbroken hearts we are so thankful for all the support, flowers, cards, Facebook and other media sentiments we have received during this staggering time in our lives. Only God knows why he was taken from us so soon. We would like to thank Dr. Michael Hatfield for officiating with his words of comfort. Also, thanks to each pallbearer that took time off to help us. A very special thank you goes out to the Henry Co Sheriff's Office, Henry Co Public Safety, Norris Funeral Services and Roselawn Memorial Gardens for making this journey a little less stressful.



<u>Death Notices</u>

Nora Gaye Hill

Nora Gaye Hill, 58, of Martinsville, Virginia passed away on Wednesday, March 23, 2022. Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is handling arrangements.

Thomas H. Tucker

Thomas H. Tucker, 75, of Bassett, Virginia passed away Wednesday, March 23, 2022, at his residence. Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is handling arrangements.

Submit your community news and photos to newsreporter@theenterprise.net

Aladdin, Jr. from page 1

rewarding and challenging, according to some of the older cast members.

Hines said the drama club has been incorporating younger students since 2018, when middle school students participated in a production of "Disney: Musical Revue."

Carter said he has enjoyed the opportunity to meet and work with those outside of his age range and grade level, particularly because "you might be working with them again."

Simpson added that, over the course of a number of productions, some of the older cast members have watched some of the younger ones grow up, as Simpson himself did with Rorrer. "I saw him go from a little kid to the guy he is now," he said.

Freshman Jyshir Plunkett, who plays the title role of Aladdin, said he has enjoyed watching some of the younger cast members progress and grow from show to show.

The younger cast members aren't the only ones expanding their craft over the course of rehearsals. The older actors have been able to work more deeply with understanding the characters they were portraying onstage.

"It's not just memorizing," Rorrer said, "there's a certain level of creativity that goes into it. We get to show our more artistic side in some scenes, which is fun to do but it's also a big challenge."

The actors said that Hines sat down with each of them to help them think creatively to learn more about their characters.

"Who do you think Jasmine is," Calfee said Hines asked her in a one-on-one session. From there, Calfee explained how she initially perceived her character from only having seen the film, and how that perception differed after reading the script.

"Then she'll reflect, and ask a few questions like, 'how do you think this will impact your performance?" Calfee said.

Carter said he benefitted from doing character work with Hines as well. "When you watch the movie, you see Genie as a very powerful being. He's able to do a lot of things. But once you slip into the role, read the script and try to truly understand the character, you realize that Genie is more human than you think. He does have his emotional side and that shows in the show. I really like that."

Simpson said delving deeper into his character helped him realize "Jafar was a lot more evil than I initially thought he was. I knew he was evil, but playing him, you realize you have to be a truly evil person," which he said is a far stretch from his own personality.

Taking on the title role of Aladdin was a stretch for Plunkett as well. "Aladdin Jr." is the 14-year-old's second production. He said he was struck by his character's playfulness, particularly in serious situations, something the young actor found challenging in his portrayal. "Usually, I'm serious in serious situations, so it was kind of weird adjusting to it, and I'm still adjusting to Aladdin," he said. "He's a very playful person. He's there to have a good time."

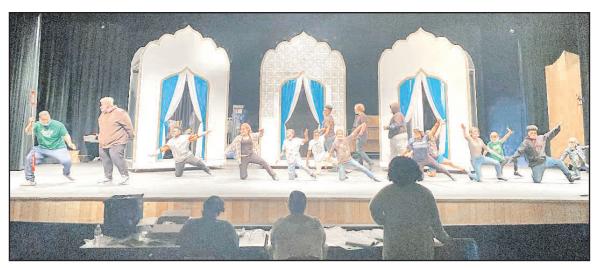
Rorrer, who at 15, has already performed in 17 productions, including several films, noted that there is no cinematic counterpart to his character, Omar. "I based it off of Abu, but as you keep reading through the lines, you realized that rather than (Omar) being a playful trickster," as Abu was in the film, "he's more of a sweet, caring friend."

All the cast agreed that the production staff did much more than help them learn lines, work on dance steps, and find their characters.

"We have phenomenal directors, choreographer, all of the staff," Simpson said. "They do so much for us. They'll make sure we have everything. If we do something wrong, they'll work with us and talk with us."

"They put so much time and effort into the show," Calfee added. "If you can't afford something, they will buy it for you. They have your back. And if it's something personal that you want to talk to them about, they're always there."

Staff are not the only ones putting time and effort into the production. Calfee said managing her time between coursework and extracurricular activities was a challenge she had to overcome.





Above, Production staff look on as the cast rehearses a song from the show. Cast members said staff members were "phenomenal" in terms of the time, effort, and passion they contributed to the production and working with students. Left, The cast of "Disney's Aladdin, Jr." (seen here rehearsing the song "Prince Ali") includes Martinsville City School students of all age-levels.

"I take eight classes right now, including college classes," she said. "Trying to juggle memorizing my lines, memorizing dance moves, everything for the play and other extracurricular activities" with classwork was difficult. Luckily, she said, deadlines set by Hines over the course of the production helped keep the cast, Calfee included, on track.

Memorization was also a challenge for Plunkett, as was learning about his character, but as he began to find Aladdin, he found "how fun it is to act and be a character, changing how your life actually is into somebody else."

Simpson said he had difficulty staying in character after the physical exertions of singing and dancing, and Carter said he struggled with keeping his breath steady during the high-energy musical numbers — a challenge he seems to have overcome if his performance in the show's opener, "Arabian Nights," during last Thursday's rehearsal was any indication.

The energy and talent the whole cast brought to the stage during the run-through of the iconic song was electric. The vast, empty auditorium was filled with voices singing the tale of "a faraway place where the caravan camels roam," painting a picture with music, song, and dance of the fantastical world the characters will inhabit during the show.

All the work, the rehearsals, the bonds, the memorization and character-finding, everything the cast has experienced since rehearsals began in January will culminate in three performances in the Martinsville High School auditorium at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, April 1-2, and a 3 p.m. matinee on Sunday, April 3. Tickets are \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door or online at mcpsfinearts.

org.

Each actor hopes that the audience will walk away from the theater feeling the time and effort put in to bringing "Aladdin, Jr." to life.

"I want them to feel everything," said Plunkett. "I want them to feel our performance" and to leave feeling the same joy and magic the movie elicits.

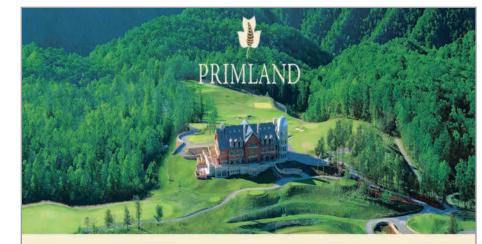
"I want the audience to relate back to the characters and know they are more than a character," Calfee said. "I want them to see the bond me and Jyshir have as Aladdin and Jasmine. I want them to leave with a good impression of our theater and our club and what it stands for."

"I want the audience to feel happy," Carter said. "Joy is a beautiful thing. To watch a show and see all the magic that can really happen on a stage, it gives you joy, it gives you happiness. At the end of the night, when they (the audience) walk out of the doors, I just want them to feel happy. I want them to have a smile on their face."

The full cast of the MCPS Drama Club's "Disney's Aladdin, Jr." includes: Aladdin (Jyshir Plunkett), Genie (Logan Carter), Jasmine (Hayden Calfee), Jafar (Eli Simpson), Iago (Samson Ray), Sultan (Nicholas DeJesus), Babkak (Alex Butler), Omar (Max Rorrer), Kassim (Caesar Draper), Isir (Zoey Hannans), Manal (Zion Perkins), Rajah (Jordan Foster), Prince Abdullah/ Razoul (Nigel Cook."

Members of the ensemble are Keandrius Beal, Bridgette Brent, Tahli Draper, Jaidence Hairston, Honesty Martin, Cameron Moore, KaVaughn Muse, Jeremiah Porter, Josiah Porter, Aurora Rankin, Lilly Rorrer, Veronica Smith, Jovonta Spencer, and Arianna Ybarra.

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