

# HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

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David Cameron tolled a bell as the name of each officer was read during the 2022 Peace Officers' Memorial Service on Wednesday. The bell echoed through the silent room - a single toll for each fallen hero.

## Officers remembered, honored for selfless sacrifice

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

State and local law enforcement officers and other members of the Martinsville-Henry County community gathered Wednesday in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the Henry County Administration Building to honor fallen officers who died in the line of duty.

"Blessed are the peacemakers," said Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry in his opening remarks at the annual Peace Officers' Memorial Service. "As our country for the last couple years has become very divided, the police officers stand right in the middle and try to bring peace."

Martinsville Mayor Kathy Lawson and Henry County Board of Supervisors Vice Chairman Joe Bryant each read a proclamation recognizing National Peace

Officers Memorial Week, and the officers from each locality who died in the line of duty.

Retired captain Tim Mills, of the Martinsville Sheriff's Office, was the guest speaker. Mills said he worked with three of the officers being honored.

"It was truly an honor to be able to work with them and to know them," he said. "Scripture tells us that love is stronger than death, that there can be no greater love than the sacrifice of oneself for others, and the ones that we come here today to remember, to honor, did that truly by sacrificing their lives for each and every one of us."

"The worst thing that can happen to an officer is to lose a fellow officer from your department," Mills said. "Whenever there is an officer that has fallen in the line of duty from any jurisdiction, we hurt. But it's a deeper hurt

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Council member Chad Martin credited the library with being a "safe haven" for him when he didn't have a job after council unanimously approved his motion to provide half of the library's request for increased local funding, which it will use to provide raises for its staff. The city will provide the other half of its requested funding should Patrick and Henry Counties agree to fully fund their portions of the library's request.

## City approves half of library funding request

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

Martinsville City Council on Tuesday unanimously approved funding half of the Blue Ridge Regional Library's (BRRL) request for additional funding to provide raises to its staff.

BRRL Director Rick Ward initially made the request during the city's May 3 budget work session. It was reiterated Tuesday during the city's public hearing on its proposed FY22-23 budget. Several members of the library board also spoke at the hearing.

During his initial presentation, Ward noted that during the decade he has served as director, the library has never received

a cost-of-living funding increase.

He requested \$13,142 from the city, which he said was a 4.45 percent increase over last year's contribution. He made the same request of Patrick County, which thus far has only agreed to level funding, and asked Henry County (which has three library branches while Patrick County and the city have only one each) for an additional \$39,427. The county has yet to take action on the request but discussed using money from one of its contingency funds to provide the increase. (See related story.)

Though the city only approved half of Ward's requested amount, or \$6,571, there is a possibility

See Approval, page 7

## Library staff, board, patrons make impassioned plea for increased funding

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

Board members, staff, and patrons of the Blue Ridge Regional Libraries (BRRL) on Monday made an emotional plea to the Henry County Board of Supervisors for increased local funding.

Of the eight speakers at the county's public hearing on its budget, seven supported the library's request an additional \$39,427 from the county, for a total of \$774,968, or a 5.36 percent increase over the system's current county funding, according to BRRL Director Rick Ward.

He said the libraries have received level funding from the county since 2019, and added that the requested increase was 0.05 percent of the county's total proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Ward said the additional

funding was needed "so we can give our hardworking staff a raise."

With inflation hovering between 6 and 8 percent, not only is the library struggling in terms of what it can purchase and what it can afford, but staff are struggling to make a living as well, he said.

With the minimum wage rising to \$12 per hour in January, Ward said "that's going to put us in a crunch," leading to salary compression wherein someone who has worked at the library for nearly 20 years could be making nearly the same as a new hire. "That makes it difficult to keep good, hard-working people."

"We noticed that Henry County was able to give their staff a 5 percent raise this year, there's a proposed 6 percent raise in their budget for them next year, and we would just ask that you

See Funding, page 5



Christal Holloway and her granddaughter, Heaven, were two of the several speakers to advocate for additional funding for the Blue Ridge Regional Library during Henry County's public hearing on its FY22-23 budget. The funding increase would be used to provide 5 percent raises to library staff.

## Magna Vista students to present 'Puffs'

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

"You see, Megan's mom, you're right. Puffs are failures. We'll try and fight you and we'll probably fail. We'll fail big time. We'll fail so hard. But eventually, we get better," Wayne Hopkins says in the play "Puffs."

The show is a comedy that tells the story of a group of young witches and wizards who attend a certain British school of magic along with a certain famous dark-haired boy with glasses and a lightning-bolt scar. While the words Harry and Potter are never mentioned anywhere side by side, and the Hogwarts name is never uttered, "Puffs" is set in a world where those things exist, where magic is real, and where, as in a certain popular series of books, love is the most powerful magic of all.

Magna Vista High School's advanced drama class has been hard at work over the past two months rehearsing the show. The actors are almost ready to share their efforts, and the show's central message, with a live audience when "Puffs" is performed at Magna Vista May 20 and 21. Both shows begin at 7 p.m.

"Puffs" is a play director Bryan Dunn, Magna Vista's theater, film, and forensics coach, has wanted to do for several years.

See Puffs, page 7



The cast and crew of Magna Vista High School's production of "Puffs," a show set at a well-known British wizarding school. The show follows Wayne, who attends the school alongside a famous orphan boy, interchangeably called Harry or Potter and "spends his entire 7 years at school trying to become something that he probably isn't," according to actor Landon George.



"Puffs" is being performed by Bryan Dunn's advanced theater class. The students have about an hour to rehearse the 90-minute show during class periods and have been hard at work for the past 2 months preparing to perform in front of a live audience on May 20 and 21. Each show begins at 7 p.m.

## What a difference IT makes: Bassett staff clean up community center

Callie Hietala  
Staff writer

The ongoing effort to reopen the Bassett Community Center got a

boost last Thursday when the staff of Bassett Furniture's Information Technology (IT) Department spent the day hard at work cleaning the shuttered facility.

The team spent the day weeding flower beds, painting the front entrance, pressure washing chairs,

See Clean Up, page 8



Staff from Bassett Furniture's I.T. Department spent a day of community service cleaning, weeding, and painting the Bassett Community Center. The center, which opened in 1960, has been closed since 2019. A group of volunteers, Save the Bassett Community Center, along with the Bassett Community Center board of trustees, has been working to raise funds to reopen the pool by this summer and the indoor facility by 2023.

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## Saturday, May 14

Join the P&HCC Fab Lab for their monthly Family Day, featuring a fun, hands-on activity for the entire family! This month, participants will use the vinyl cutter to create unique, custom designed stickers! Family Day is held from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. The cost is \$15.

The Southwest Piedmont Beekeepers Association will host a field from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Bassett. Observe bees in the hive! Rain date is Saturday, May 28. Call or email for more information. 276-694-2769 or amylibergamo@gmail.com.

## Sunday, May 15

Join in the fun at the Spencer-Penn Centre (475 Spencer-Penn Road, Spencer) for a sock hop from 2-5 p.m.! DJ What? will provide the music and refreshments will be served. Games will be on hand for non-dancers who prefer to socialize. Admission is a \$5 donation at the door.

Monday, May 16 and 23  
The P&HCC Fab Lab hosts a two-part drip painting class. Participants will use the vinyl cutter and paint pouring to create a custom drip painting. Each class will be held from 6:30-8 p.m.. The cost is \$25.

## Wednesday, May 18

The P&HCC Fab Lab continues its paper crafting series with rubber stamps. In this workshop, students will learn unexpected and creative uses for rubber stamps. Techniques like mirror stamping, stamping off, and wax paper resist will be introduced. The class is held from 6:30-7:30 p.m. and the cost is \$15.

Martinsville City Council will hold a budget work session beginning at 6 p.m. in council chambers of the city municipal building.

## Thursday, May 19

Uptown Partnership presents Third Thursdays in Uptown in

collaboration with the Virginia Museum of Natural History. The events will be held in the Franklin Street/Depot Street parking lot in Martinsville. Palumbo's Hoagie House, Daddy Q's BBQ, and Tammy's Grill will be present from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. with entertainment from DJ What and beer sales from Mountain Valley Brewing from 5-9 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

The Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce will host the 2022 Business Appreciation Luncheon beginning at 12 p.m. at the Heritage Conference and Event Center (1230 Oak Level Road, Bassett.) This year's keynote speaker is Terry Young, interim vice president of academic and student success services at Patrick & Henry Community College. Tickets are \$18, payable at the door. Contact the Chamber at (276) 632-6401 or mhccoc@mhccchamber.com to RSVP by Monday, May 16.

## Saturday, May 21

The Martinsville-Henry County SPCA will be at Petsense in Martinsville (240 West Commonwealth Blvd) from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. for an adoption event. Come meet some of the furry friends available for adoption from the shelter.

The Bassett Cruise In returns for 2022! Join the fun at Bassett Furniture World Headquarters on Fairy Stone Park Highway from 3-7 p.m. All makes and models welcome. Be sure to grab a snack from the food court.

Join Young Life MHC for a day in the community with friends and family for a great cause at the Cornhole Classic beginning at 12 p.m. at the Smith River Sports Complex. Participants can compete in two brackets, a competitive bracket and a family fun bracket. Lunch is included in registration or can be purchased by spectators. For more information, visit Young Life Martinsville-Henry County on Facebook.

Smith River Trout Unlimited invites all to participate in the "Introduction to Fly Fishing for Adults and Youth" workshop. This is an entry-level event for people interested in learning about or getting started in the sport of fly fishing. The 2-hour event will be held from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. at the picnic shelter Fieldale Park, 11 Fieldale Ave., Fieldale,

Henry County. Participants are asked to dress according to the weather forecast. Ice cold bottled water will be provided. Sign up early, the workshop is limited to 12 persons. Please contact Jeff Deering (jdeer76@yahoo.com) or Eric Tichay (ericichay@yahoo.com). This event is free.

The Spencer-Penn Centre (475 Spencer-Penn Road, Spencer) hosts a decorative grapevine wreath workshop with Melanie Barrow. All instruction, supplies, adornments, and ribbon are included in the cost of this 3-hour class. The cost is \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members. To register, call (276) 957-5757. Payment is required at registration.

## Sunday, May 22

Support the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society with Afternoon Tea at One Starling from 3-5 p.m. Attendees will enjoy tea, sherry, mimosas, music, and traditional English refreshments. Reservations are \$20 per person and must be made in advance by calling or visiting the Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center and Museum or One Starling.

## Tuesday, May 24

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold its regular meeting at 3 and 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the Henry County Administration Building.

Martinsville City Council will hold its regular meeting beginning at 7 p.m. in council chambers of the City Municipal Building.

## Wednesday, May 25

New College Institute invites the public to celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month with a free culture showcase featuring education, music, and dance from 4-6 p.m. This event is free to attend.

## Thursday, May 26

The Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce is hosting a family fun game night from 5:30-7 p.m. at the Martinsville Farmers' Market! Join in the fun with oversized games,

a DJ, and Market vendors. The event is free to attend!

## Saturday, May 28

Scuffle Hill Brewing, Gym 24, and Giving Back LLC are co-sponsoring a ruck march to honor fallen military and first responders. Participants should meet at Gym 24 at 9 a.m. for a formation ruck march around Uptown Martinsville. Wear your silksies, best motivational t-shirts, plate carriers, backpacks, flags, etc., though such items are not mandatory. After the march, participants may enjoy \$1 pints at Scuffle Hill Brewing.

## Sunday, May 29

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will premier the documentary film, "A Conversation with American Heroes from Martinsville & Henry County" at 3 p.m. in the Walker Theatre of Patrick & Henry Community College.

## Saturday, June 4

Uptown Partnership will host its fourth community engagement conversation from 1-2:30 p.m. to hear feedback and engage with the public on Uptown revitalization priorities.

## ONGOING

The Magna Vista Horticulture Spring Plant Sale is open. Weekday hours are 9-3 p.m., and some additional hours will be held. For complete information, sales, and additional hours, visit the Magna Vista Horticulture Facebook page.

The Martinsville Farmers' Market is open every Saturday from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. through November 20 and Wednesdays from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. through September 29. Shop with SNAP/EBT and receive up to \$20 in free fruits and vegetables each week. To shop market vendors online, visit martinsvilleuptown.com.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

The Henry County Adult Learning Center offers free in house and online classes to help prepare for college, career, or earn your high school equivalency or GED. Classes can help improve your digital literacy, job skills, English language skills, and earning potential. Contact the Center for Community Learning (15 Primary School Road, Collinsville) at (276) 647-9585.

# Remembered

from page 1

when it's a friend, when it's a brother, when it's a sister, when it's a partner. We're a very close family and we care very much for each other.

"These officers, these heroes that we honor today defended us even to the very

end. I can't think of a truer definition of a hero than those who served and sacrificed for a purpose far greater than themselves," he said, and called on those attending to help ease any divisions.

"As we honor our fallen

officers, let us rededicate ourselves to the high ideals that they had. Let us rededicate ourselves to the great devotion that these officers had for our community. Let us recommit ourselves to defending freedom, to

guarding peace, and fighting for the justice that we truly deserve," he said.

Mills ended his remarks with a quote from Gen. George S. Patton, who once said, "Let us not mourn that such men died, but rejoice that such men lived."

Virginia State Police 1st Sgt. M.C. Davis read the names of Martinsville and Henry County officers who fell in the line of duty, along with the date of their end of watch. As each name was read, a bell tolled and a single, solemn note echoing through an utterly silent room. Davis waited for the last whispers of each toll to fade completely before calling the next name.

Darlene Isom attended the ceremony in which her father, (Willis) Herman Ferguson was among those honored.

Isom said she was 16 when her father was killed in 1975. Her sister was 14, and her

brother was just 1-year old. As the eldest child, it became her job to help care for the house and her younger siblings so her mother could work and support the family. "He was a great dad," she recalled of Ferguson. The impact of his death in 1975 is felt in the family to this day, as evidenced by the tissue in her hand and the tears in her eyes.

Ferguson "loved his work," Isom said, adding that he worked at both the Fieldale and the Bassett Police departments before going to work for the Henry County Sheriff's Office.

"It's wonderful to know that he's not forgotten," Isom said. "And it's wonderful for the community to be reminded that this can happen. We hope that no more names get added to that list."

Those officers recognized at the 2022 Peace Officers' Memorial Service were:

### Henry County Sheriff's Office

Paul Edward Grub (end of watch July 2, 1989)

George Melvin Brown (end of watch June 26, 1984)

Willis Herman Ferguson (end of watch March 18, 1975)

John Hughes Mitchell (end of watch May 4, 1922)

### Bassett Police Department

George S. Frame (end of watch March 18, 1923)

### Fieldale Police Department

John J. Johnston (end of watch Jan. 27, 1945)

### Martinsville Police Department

Jonathan W. Bowling (end of watch Jan. 26, 2005)

George F. Carter (end of watch June 14, 1919)

### Virginia State Police

Charles Eugene Morris (end of watch 1962)

James Michael Phillippi (end of watch Jan. 11, 2014)

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9			10		11		12
13			14		15		
16			17		18		
19		20	21			22	
23		24	25			26	
	27		28	29	30		
		31		32	33		
		34		35	36		37
38			39		40	41	42
43			44		45	46	47
48		49	50			51	52
53				54		55	
56					57		
58						59	

- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. As fast as can be done
  - 5. WC's
  - 9. Religious retreat
  - 11. Warfare
  - 13. One you wouldn't expect
  - 15. Disease-causing micro-organisms
  - 16. For each
  - 17. Grammatical term
  - 19. One point east of southeast
  - 21. \_\_\_ Dern, actress
  - 22. Popular HBO drama (abbr.)
  - 23. Shampoo
  - 25. Scale drawing of a structure
  - 26. An enclosure for confining livestock
  - 27. Goat-like mammal
  - 29. Cigar
  - 31. Appear
  - 33. "Westworld" actress \_\_\_ Rachel Wood
  - 34. Leaked through
  - 36. The highest adult male singing voice
  - 38. Musical group \_\_\_ Soundsystem
  - 39. Aurochs
  - 41. Crazy (Spanish)
  - 43. Swiss river
  - 44. Strains
  - 46. Frock
  - 48. Found in most body tissues
  - 52. Cool!
  - 53. Reasons behind
  - 54. Christian recluse
  - 56. Removes
  - 57. Repents
  - 58. Energy
  - 59. Tailless amphibian
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Not awake
  - 2. Type of dessert
  - 3. They \_\_\_
  - 4. Retired Coast Guard admiral
  - 5. Gene positions
  - 6. Exclude
  - 7. One who is bound
  - 8. Where drinks are served
  - 9. Small vipers
  - 10. Blackbird
  - 11. Adventurer
  - 12. Shade
  - 14. A way to gain
  - 15. A salt or ester of boric acid
  - 18. Monetary units
  - 20. Removed
  - 24. "My country, tis of \_\_\_"
  - 26. Horses
  - 28. Drives back by force
  - 30. Bold, impudent behavior
  - 32. Rates
  - 34. Types of nerves in males
  - 35. A ridge of sand created by the wind
  - 37. Wind instrument
  - 38. Pakistani city
  - 40. Dry or withered
  - 42. Delivered a speech
  - 43. Peak
  - 45. Small waterbird
  - 47. Days falling in mid-month
  - 49. Elvis' daughter
  - 50. Flat and smooth
  - 51. Dallas Cowboys great Leon
  - 55. What cows say

# Collinsville student inducted into Honor Society

Kenlee Hylton of Collinsville, was recently initiated into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective all-discipline collegiate honor society. Hylton was initiated at Old Dominion University.

Hylton is among approximately 25,000 students, faculty, professional staff and alumni to be initiated into Phi Kappa Phi each year. Membership is by invitation only and requires nomination and approval by a chapter. Only the top 10 percent of seniors and 7.5 percent of juniors are eligible for membership. Graduate students in the top 10 percent of the number of candidates for graduate degrees may also qualify, as do faculty,

professional staff and alumni who have achieved scholarly distinction.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 under the leadership of undergraduate student Marcus L. Urann who had a desire to create a different kind of honor society: one that recognized excellence in all academic disciplines. Today, the Society has chapters on more than 325 campuses in the United States, its territories and the Philippines. Its mission is "To recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others."

For more information about Phi Kappa Phi, visit [www.phikappaphi.org](http://www.phikappaphi.org).

# The Main Street approach to uptown revitalization



Attendees at the second Uptown Partnership community conversation about uptown revitalization were asked to express their thoughts about what projects should be prioritized in the uptown by placing color-coded stickers in different categories, including pocket park upgrades, the creation of an amphitheater, and the placement of historical interpretive signage. Some options, like the amphitheater, façade improvements, and pedestrian-friendly street designs, were overwhelmingly popular while other options, like an uptown dog park and pocket park upgrades received mixed reactions.

**Callie Hietala**  
Staff writer

“Why is uptown important?” Jeff Sadler asked a crowd of around 75 people gathered in the TAD Space in uptown Martinsville. They came together for the second in a series of four community engagement conversations about uptown’s current revitalization effort, spearheaded by Uptown Partnership (UP) and its executive director, Kathy Deacon.

While attendees had the opportunity to provide input on prioritizing some potential revitalization projects at the end of the session, much of the second meeting was dedicated to Sadler, who described the Main Street approach and methodology for revitalizing downtowns (or, in Martinsville’s case, uptown.)

As Deacon explained, Martinsville is currently a Main Street Affiliate but is working toward the next tier Main Street designation. Before Sadler described the central tenants and functions of the Main Street program, he first broached the big question—why is uptown important at all?

“I think most people get this now,” he said, but a decade or so ago, that was not the case. Uptown, he explained, is a prominent center of employment and a significant part of the city’s tax base. “It’s the most densely-built part of the city. It’s also usually the most privately-owned properties.” Additionally, uptown is the ideal location for independent businesses, he said. “It was built for independent businesses, the scale of the buildings was made for independent businesses.”

Uptown also is the historic core of the community. “This is where decisions were made, good and bad,” he said, adding that investments were made in uptown and it was historically the place for social activities.

Further, he said, uptown is the predominant image of the community. “Nobody comes into the community and says, ‘man, Martinsville has the best Walmart I’ve ever been to.’ It might be the best Walmart, but nobody really thinks about that. They think about what are the unique attributes of the community and the historic business district is really where it’s all centered.”

And finally, uptown “represents a huge public and private investment,” he said. “All the sidewalks, all the water and sewer, all the streets, all the alleyways,” electric, gas lines, buildings and their upgrades, repairs, and updates, all are representations of that investment.

**Revitalization barriers**  
Sadler gave a number of

reasons that every downtown/uptown area does not get revitalized. First, it is a long-term process and takes a deal of hard work. “You’ve got to continue to do it,” he said, often with volunteers rotating in and out of the process to avoid burnout.

Secondly, he said, previous attempts at revitalization may have failed, possibly due to wrong ideas or poor implementation. He also cited an apathetic public as another reason for lack of a revitalization effort.

Another barrier to revitalization, Sadler said, is competing interests. “Property owners don’t always agree on what should go on. Local governments don’t always agree on who should be in charge,” he said, adding that “I’m not saying those disagreements are going on specifically here.”

Old ideas and perceptions also could hinder a revitalization effort. Oftentimes, Sadler explained, “people aren’t following the trends of what’s going on and so they are trying to do what would have been a great idea in 1999 but it’s 2022.”

“The good news is that that Main Street Approach works despite these challenges,” Sadler said. “I have never seen a case where someone actually diligently follows the process where it has not been successful. It may not be as successful as they want it to be, but it has always been successful. Where I have seen it not be successful is when people say ‘we are Main Street’ but they don’t actually do Main Street.”

**Main Street methodology**

Sadler explained that the Main Street program is a methodology combining historic preservation, economic development, and public involvement for prosperity and vitality uptown. It was founded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation around the time that bypasses and shopping malls were being built, causing downtowns to suffer. He said that the trust did some pilot programs in the 1970s to learn which methods worked and which did not, and that the organization constantly refines and updates its methodology.

“The reason historic preservation is important,” Sadler explained, “is because it really helps you show off the identity of the community and create a sense of place ... You want to create a place where people feel comfortable, safe, interested, and that they have opportunity ... People have choices in where they want to come and where they want to live and where they want to be. It’s not like before where you travel for jobs. Now jobs travel for workers so getting people interested is



Jeff Sadler, the Martinsville-Henry County Housing and Revitalization Coordinator, discussed the Main Street approach to uptown revitalization with around 75 people who attended the meeting. He emphasized that the work of revitalization must be volunteer-driven, with a board and committees made up of stakeholders in the community.

the basis of it all.”

He said that, traditionally, Martinsville has not done a good job with historic preservation uptown. “You guys really have some amazing architecture here and I encourage you to treasure it because you can’t recreate it,” he said.

The Main Street approach, he explained, uses the traditional assets of an area—the built environment, the people, and the history—as a catalyst and basis for revitalization. Outcomes of that revitalization are increased entrepreneurship, pride, strong public/private partnerships, vibrancy, equity both in terms of equality and ownership, and sense of place.

Place, he said, is “what you’ll hear over and over again through Main Street, creating that sense of place, that special place.”

Sadler went on to describe the organization of a Main Street program, noting that it was required at the state and national level to be separate and independent because of the need to make decisions about uptown by those who comprise the uptown community—those who use uptown, uptown property owners, and those that work or own businesses in the area.

It must be a formally organized group, he said, rather than an ad hoc group of people, and made up of stakeholders with a full board of directors and committee structure.

Further, he said, a Main Street organization must be volunteer-driven and staff coordinated. “This part’s really important,” he said.

Sadler told the crowd that he has been coming to Martinsville for nearly 15 years, trying to work with the uptown district. “One thing I’ve heard pretty consistently throughout that is that somebody in these meetings will say, ‘well, who’s going to do this?’ And the answer is it’s you. Kathy (Deacon) is the staff. Her job is to coordinate all your efforts so you’re not bumping into each other, to make sure the resources are available and they’re at the right place at the right time and all the planning is done. But really, the work has to be you and everybody you know.”

The work of a Main Street organization is centered around 8 principles, Sadler said. First, it is comprehensive, taking place in the entire uptown area all at once. Secondly, it is incremental, happening a little bit at a time. As an example, he said perhaps a new awning was placed on a building one day, an alleyway beautification project took place the following week, a new event was hosted down the street some time after that, and eventually a new retail space or restaurant opened up. “It’s just constantly one

thing after another,” he explained.

Public/private partnerships are another of the Main Street principals, Sadler said, explaining that “it’s got to be action-oriented. So many Main Street organizations have trouble because people love to sit in a room and do this,” he said, referring to the day’s meeting, “but when it comes time to actually implement all of those ideas, nobody stands up.”

The fourth principle is building on existing assets. “We’re not knocking everything down and starting from scratch,” he said, and added that another principle is an emphasis on quality. “The construction in uptown is irreplaceable today. That needs to be presented in stores and the service and the streets and the signs and everything else around it.”

Changing attitudes is yet another aspect of the Main Street approach, he said, and recounted a day a few months ago when he was purchasing materials at Lowe’s. He said the cashier, a 20-year-old woman, said she had never been to uptown, believing it to be dirty and a location for frequent shootings. “There are people in your community who work maybe a mile away that have some outdated attitudes about uptown,” he said.

Finally, Sadler said, the last principle is self-help. “You’ve got to do this,” he told the crowd. “It’s all up to you.”

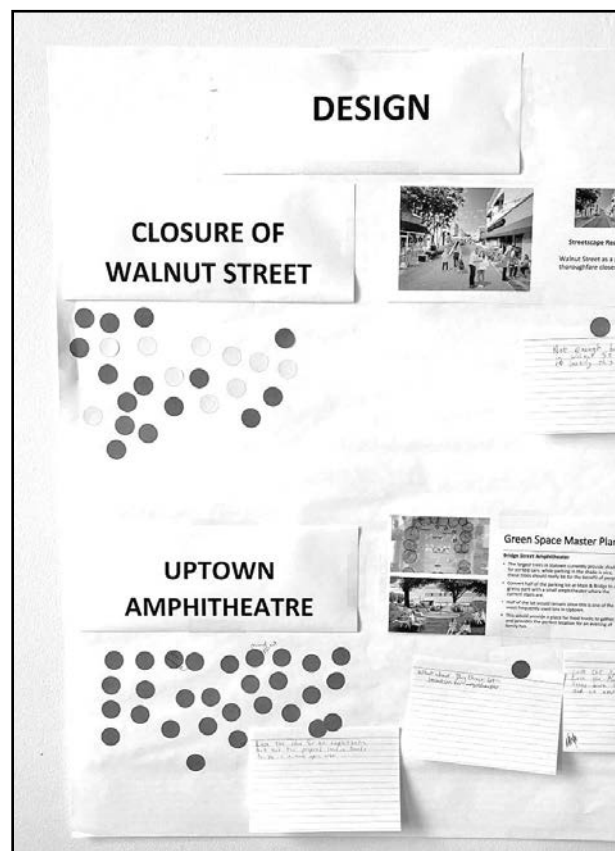
**Community priorities**

Following Sadler’s presentation, the audience was put to the task of expressing their opinions on what they would like UP to prioritize moving forward. Large sheets of paper were taped up around the room, each with several key recommendations from the community visioning process and survey completed by the Richmond-based Downtown Economics. Recommendations were broken down into three main categories: design, promotions, and economic vitality.

Recommendations under the design category included designing streets for people (including the addition of benches and trash cans, public art, shade trees, restored storefront windows, and safe street crossings), the creation of an uptown dog park, pocket park upgrades, façade improvements, the closure of Walnut Street to cars to create a pedestrian thoroughfare, and the creation of an uptown amphitheater.

The promotions category included a sculpture trail/mural projects, interpretive historical signage, and additional performance opportunities.

Recommendations that fell under economic vitality were small scale manufac-



One of the survey sheets from the meeting indicate that attendees were overwhelmingly in favor of the creation of an amphitheater, while the closure of Walnut Street received mixed reactions.

turing, business attraction, and access to capital mechanisms.

Attendees were handed a sheet with colored dots as well as several note cards. Deacon asked people to go around the room, placing green dots by the recommendations they would like to see prioritized, yellow dots by those they did not care about, and red by the ones they did not want to see any resources go toward. Further, she said, should someone want to expand on why they placed a dot by a particular recommendation, they could elaborate on the notecards.

Several recommendations received entirely green dots: designing streets for people, façade improvements, an uptown amphitheater, and all of the economic vitality recommendations.

Pocket park upgrades and the closure of Walnut Street each received mainly yellow dots, with a few red and several green. Participants also were divided on the creation of an uptown dog park, though it received more green dots than reds or yellows.

Participants seemed to generally be in favor of interpretive historical signage and additional performance opportunities, which both received mainly green dots with a few yellow, while a sculpture trail/mural project was fairly evenly split between green and yellow dots.

A final sheet gave people the option to sign up to volunteer on an UP committee to participate with the revitalization effort, echoing back to Sadler’s statement that the work must be primarily volunteer-driven. By the time the crowd began to leave the TAD Space after the meeting, only a handful of people of the estimated

75 in attendance signaled their interest in volunteering.

After the meeting, Sadler noted that the activity at the meeting was “gauging community response to the recommendations of the consulting group, but of course this will also be measured with national best practices to help prioritize things.”

For example, he said, even if everyone disagreed with the idea of a dog park at the meeting, if 60 or 80 new apartments become available in uptown, “some of those people are going to need a place to walk their dog.”

He also noted that, just because a recommendation received entirely green dots by those who attended the meeting, that did not necessarily mean it would be immediately implemented. The issue of two-way streets in uptown, for example (which was not one of the recommendations provided for people to vote on at Thursday’s meeting, but has been a recommendation of many past studies as well as the current one), even if it was overwhelmingly popular, would still take a good deal of time to accomplish, as a traffic study and other work would need to be completed prior to actually being able to implement the change.

The third community engagement conversation took place on Wednesday, May 11 from 6-7:30 p.m., while the fourth is scheduled for Saturday, June 4 from 1-2:30 p.m. Locations for the final conversations have not yet been announced.

To stay up to date with the community conversations and other UP news, find Martinsville UP on Facebook.



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## OPINION

## High roller

Every Mother's Day weekend, I treat my mom to lunch at one of our favorite restaurants in Greensboro. When we arrived there this past Saturday, there was a line out the door, and we were told there would be an hour and 15 minute wait.

I was pretty hungry and sitting around doing nothing for more than an hour seemed boring. Suddenly, an idea began to form, and I decided to try something I'd never once done before. I asked my mom if she knew if there was an ATM nearby.

"Why?"

"I think I'm going to try bribing the hostess to see if we can jump to the top of the line," I said.

"Does that work in real life?" my mom asked. "I've only ever seen that in movies and TV shows."

"I don't know," I said. "I have a friend who's done it before. I guess it's worth a shot."

There wasn't a nearby ATM, but my mom had some cash on her and I told her I'd pay her back. After some quick mental math based on the fanciness of

the restaurant combined with the sheer number of people waiting for tables, I determined that \$40 would probably be a fair amount.

I nervously walked up to the hostess stand.

"Hello," I said. "I'm on the waiting list under 'Ben Williams.'"

"Yes," the hostess said.

I subtly pushed the wad of cash across the desk.

"I was wondering if we could jump a little higher on the list."

To my surprise, she took the money casually and without a second thought, like it was the most natural thing in the world.

"Of course," she said. "Thank you."

I sat back down.

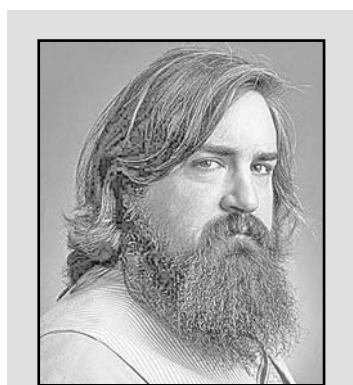
"Did it work?" my mom asked.

She hadn't been able to bring herself to actually watch the transaction.

"Yeah," I said, "I think so."

About three minutes later, the hostess ushered us to our table.

Now you might be saying, "Ben, that wasn't very fair to the other customers who were waiting, most of whom had been waiting longer than you." And while I don't disagree, I will offer the following counterpoints: my mom was pretty impressed and I felt like a real big shot.



By Ben R. Williams

I don't know that I'll be pulling this trick again any time soon, largely because I'm a cheapskate, but it was a fascinating experience. For just a moment, I'd been able to pull back the curtain and briefly experience the kind of lifestyle that the wealthy enjoy, like someone getting transferred from coach to first class due to a screw-up at the airport. Not a bad deal for forty bucks.

At the same time, once the buzz of being a high roller had worn off, I came to realize that what I'd done was, on a very small scale, a microcosm of what's wrong with the world.

A couple of years ago, a

story came out that while his Washington, DC mansion was being renovated, Jeff Bezos and his contractors racked up about \$18,000 worth of parking tickets. Most of the tickets came from parking in clearly marked "NO PARKING" zones, and it added up to nearly 600 citations over the course of three years.

If I somehow managed to rack up \$18,000 in parking tickets, I would fake my own death and start a new life in a different country. But Jeff Bezos is worth \$150 billion. \$18,000 is nothing to him. For perspective, he spent \$23 million on the DC mansion plus another \$12 million to renovate it. That \$35 million represents just 0.02 percent of Bezos' net worth. Even the man's mansion is chump change to him. For the purposes of comparison, if I were to spend 0.02 percent of my net worth, I could buy my burger and fries, but I would not have enough cash left over to upsize my combo.

The issue here is that if a law is punishable by a fine, then that law does not apply to the wealthy. Similarly, if a law is passed that can be legally circumvented with money, then that law also does not apply to the wealthy.

And we're going to be seeing

a lot of that very soon. Now that Roe v. Wade is on the chopping block, a lot of states will instantly ban abortion. But even if every state in the union institutes a total ban on abortion, that doesn't mean the wealthy will no longer get abortions; it means that every wealthy politician who voted to ban abortion will simply take his mistress on a weekend trip to Canada when the need arises.

And of course, we have all seen that when you're wealthy enough, breaking the law has very different consequences. If you or I were to steal a nice TV from a big box store, we would be charged with grand theft. But when our financial institutions destroyed the economy in 2008, nobody went to jail. We have all simply come to accept the fact that the ultra rich don't face consequences for their actions; whether they're hiding money in offshore accounts or fomenting violent revolution against the government, the rich and powerful never seem to even get a slap on the wrist.

It can all be very discouraging. But on the plus side, I'm already feeling better about tipping that hostess.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Against Abortion, But ...

I'm anti-abortion, but... (This is where Republicans start hating me - "there can be no 'buts' in this discussion" they say). Wait a minute! I'm opposed to all abortions; I don't think that there's a justifiable scenario where we kill a baby in the womb. However, I'm not all smiles during this time of possibly overturning Roe v. Wade. Now, hold on! Hear me out:

When Democrats talk about gun control, what do Republicans say back? They say "it's a heart problem, not a gun

problem." I'm asking if overturning Roe v. Wade will really stop women from killing their baby in their womb, or will they just find outside means like they used to do?

I know the analogy of gun control and abortion does not fit 100%: you have a constitutional right to defend yourself, but a woman does not have a constitutional right to kill a baby in her womb. However, I think what is the same is the root of both issues: hearts of the people. People willing to take the life of an innocent person.

The way I see it is that killing babies in the womb is a symptom of a problem, and not the actual problem itself. By overturning Roe v. Wade we are not promoting the real cure, but rather still treating a symptom.

So what is the problem? Sex outside of marriage or "fornication" as the Bible would call it. If unmarried people stopped making unplanned, unwanted babies then there be no more abortions. Now, I know that someone might call that a bone-headed no-brainer.

However, is it not the case that the simplest answer is often the best? Occam's Razor, right?

Another problem that I have during this time is that the people who should be "amending" my above thoughts won't: American sectarians. I cannot tell you how many sectarian preachers there are that will not say it's sinful for an unmarried man and woman to cohabitate, or "shack up" as we call it. If they preached against that then they might upset some members, and then less money would be put

into the plate.

"What about the separation of church and state?" You know I don't think Thomas Jefferson meant that the church could never talk about politics considering Thomas Payne used the book of Judges and 1 Samuel to help build the American Republic that we now enjoy. Everyone gets political tips from their particular pulpits. All I'm saying is that most are not getting good tips anymore.

The more liberal sects openly support killing babies in their moth-

ers' wombs, calling it "Women's health rights." However, the sects who would call themselves "conservatives" will oppose the killing of the baby in the womb, but they won't oppose the process by which the unwanted baby was made: fornication.

As I see different sectarians celebrating the potential overturning of Roe v. Wade I just see a multitude of hypocrites. Even still I hope they "abort" Roe v. Wade.

Caleb Robertson,  
Martinsville

## Hairston earns M.Ed. from Concordia University

Jasmine Hairston, of Martinsville, earned a M.Ed. from Concordia University, Nebraska.

In a May 7 ceremony, Concordia University, Nebraska awarded undergraduate and graduate

degrees to more than 400 graduates. The Class of 2022 was honored during undergraduate and graduate commencement ceremonies.

At the ceremony, Concordia President Dr. Bernard Bull encouraged graduates to embrace opportunities with a combination of boldness and humility while using their gifts, talents and abilities to serve God and others. He reminded students to heed God's call to learn and lead in the church and in the world, always seeking to serve with wisdom, clarity of conviction and character.

"Graduates, you are a blessing from God. Even as so many have sought to invest in your education and faith formation these past years, you have blessed the

Concordia community, and now you will embark on what God has in store for you next," said Bull. "You are now and forever will be a Concordian, one who takes what you have learned in the classrooms, courts, fields, chapel, and beyond and uses all of that to be a blessing to those around you."

Dr. Kurt Senske, founder and principal of CEO-Board Services and 2022 recipient of a Concordia University, Nebraska doctor of laws degree, presented the commencement address.

"We as Christians have a unique advantage," said Senske. "We come to the starting line with a head start. This is the value of a Christ-infused university education and living a Christ-filled life. Being

a Christian allows us to look beyond our ego. It compels us to go beyond ourselves. It is the force behind what we do. It defines who we are. It provides our life with worth and meaning."

Senske encouraged graduates to keep Christ at the center of their lives, setting aside prevalent worldly messages and influences often found on social media and elsewhere.

"With Christ in the center of our life, with us secure in the knowledge that our story eternally will never end, the pressure is off," he added. "We are no longer constrained to be merely be successful in this life. Instead, we have the privilege of being called to be faithful."

Senske reminded

graduates that times of suffering, hardship and disappointment are God-given opportunities to discover new purpose in life. He also pointed out that how we live each day and not what we do is what truly matters.

"As Christians we are free to embrace the immense power that we receive when we become bold in our faith and actions," said Senske. "I believe in the power of Concordia University. I believe in the power of each of you as graduates. I believe in the power of each one of us. Individually and collectively - beginning today - you, we, I, have the God-given opportunity to make a difference in the lives of those we serve via our community, family, and profession."

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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

## Facebook whistleblower, health experts discuss social media's impact on kids

Last year, a whistleblower at Facebook lifted the curtain on how the platform, and its sister companies, impact young kids' mental health. Frances Haugen, a former Facebook product manager, alongside teachers and health experts, is raising concerns about the long-term effects social media can have on kids. In an event this week hosted by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), she described the corrosive effects social media have on kids' mental well-being as a public health crisis. "If we hold children's toys to a product liability standard, where you need to demonstrate you did safety by design, why aren't we asking the same thing of these virtual products for children?" Haugen questioned. "Especially as we move into the land of the 'metaverse,' which is going to be an emergent harm."

Haugen argued social media companies should be held to Congressionally-mandated standards, an idea which has rare bipartisan support on Capitol Hill. Meta, Facebook's parent company, contended it already has adequate internal safeguards and protocols. Among other things, Haugen revealed leaders at Instagram, which is also owned by Meta, knew the platform's algorithm fed kids potentially harmful content, but opted to essentially double down in order to drive user engagement. Dalia Hashad, director of online safety for the Washington, D.C.-based organization ParentsTogether, said such strategies have long-term consequences. "Without fail, the longer a child spends online, the higher their level of anxiety, the higher the level of mood

swings, aggressive behavior, feelings of worthlessness," Hashad outlined. Dr. Warren Ng, president of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology, said having open lines of communication can prevent issues before they arise. He explained it starts with simply asking kids how they're doing. "And don't ask them in a way that 'You're OK, right?' No, really ask them, 'Things are really tough right now, how are you doing?' And really being open to that; but also being open to hearing not good news," Ng advised. The AFT has an archive of previous webinars and educational resources for parents and teachers looking to provide emotional and psychological support for students.

Virginia News Connection  
Jonah Chester

# OBITUARIES

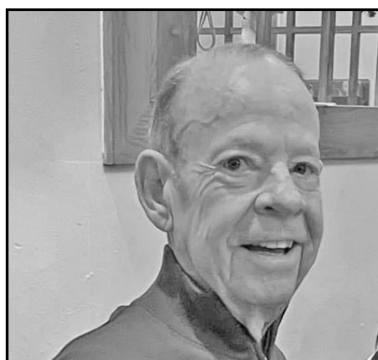
## Ronnie Wayne Martin

Ronnie Wayne Martin, a lifetime resident of Martinsville & Henry County, passed away on Tuesday, May 3, 2022, at the age of 72. After several months of declining health, Ronnie died peacefully with his beloved wife Nancy by his side.

Ronnie was born in Martinsville on December 30, 1949, to father Fred Samuel Martin and mother Hattie Oakes Martin. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by brothers Glenwood Martin and James "J.D." Martin and sisters Doris Earles and Linda Hancock.

The youngest of eight children, Ronnie didn't have the opportunity for much formal education. He worked any odd jobs he could find starting at an early age. His work ethic and desire to take care of his family led him to a long and successful career of 50+ years with Martin Processing, later becoming Ronile Inc.

If you asked Ronnie his greatest accomplishments, it wasn't his career or golf game. It was being a husband, father, grandfather, and friend. Anyone who knew Ronnie was touched by his kindness and humor. He



had a generous spirit with a strong compassion for helping those in need. His family will strive to honor his legacy and continue to serve others as he did.

Ronnie never met a stranger and had an infectious laugh that would fill a room. His most cherished moments were spent at golf trips in South Carolina, summers with his children and grandchildren at the Jersey Shore, family gatherings at his sister, Linda "Bug" Hancock's home, dining out with Nancy and friends and cooking on the grill while having a glass of wine with his treasured bullmastiff, Mojo.

Ronnie will be missed by all who knew him, and his passing leaves a huge hole in the hearts

of many. The family wishes to thank Dr. Katragadda, Annie Penn Oncology, Dr. Matthew Arroya and Mountain Valley Hospice. A special thanks to caregivers Lorena Steen, Lornestine Penn & Eric Hall.

Those left to cherish his memory are his devoted wife of 53 years, Nancy Plott Martin and his two sons, Bradley, and his wife, Jennifer of Lake Barrington, IL and Matthew Martin of Blacksburg, VA. He is also survived by four grandchildren, Bradley, Colin, Ella & Emma Martin of Lake Barrington, IL, as well as brothers Ted Martin, and his wife, Barbara of Talbot, TN, Jerry Martin of High Point, NC and Larry Martin, and his wife, Joann of Concord, NC.

A visitation will be held at Norris Funeral Home at 1500 Kings Mountain Rd, Martinsville, VA 24112 on Saturday, May 14, 2022, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Donations may be made in Ronnie's honor to The Martinsville & Henry County SPCA, <https://www.spcamhc.org/form/donate>. Online condolences may be made at [www.NorrisFuneral.com](http://www.NorrisFuneral.com).

## Charles Wilton Sigmon



Charles Wilton Sigmon, 70 of Axton, Virginia, passed May 10, 2022, at his residence. He was born in Bassett to the late Melvin and Ada Janey Sigmon on December 15, 1951. He had worked in maintenance with Ridgeway Clocks. He was in a hunting club, loved fishing, hunting, woodworking and loved to mow his yard, and was always willing to help friends and neighbors and to be there for them and loved

each one of them.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by sisters, Louise McGhee, Mabel Martin, Evelyn Fulcher, and Dot Sigmon; and his brothers, Lewis Sigmon and Robert Sigmon.

Charles is survived by his wife, Gaynell Murdock Sigmon; Goddaughter, Mickey Dalton; son, Chris Sigmon; sisters, Mae Naff, and Gay Thomas; a special niece, Julia Ann Comfort; several nieces and nephews; and his special fur baby "Marlee."

His memorial service was held on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 in the chapel of Wright Funeral Service. Pastor Don Reynolds officiated.

Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

## Funding

from page 1

increase our contribution so we can give our staff a 5 percent raise as well."

Ward made a similar presentation to the Martinsville City Council during its May 3 budget work session. At that meeting, he noted that in the decade he has been director of BRRL, the library has never received funding for a cost-of-living increases.

Ward requested \$13,142 from the city to address salary issues, which he said was a 4.45 percent increase over last year's contribution and 0.02 percent of the city's total proposed budget. He said he made the same request of Patrick County which, like Martinsville, only has one library branch while Henry County has three.

He explained to both the city and county that the total cost needed to achieve the 5 percent wage increases was divided between the three localities BRRL serves based on the number of branches in each locality.

Margaret Caldwell, of the Collinsville District, who sits on the library division's board of trustees, said funding from those localities comprise 74 percent of the library budget, with Henry County shouldering the majority share at 41 percent.

"Seventy-four percent of the budget means we cannot give our people a raise unless the local governments give us an increase. We just cannot do it."

"You may recall that, ever since Ben Franklin started the first library in Philadelphia, the locality has had the responsibility of the library system," she said. "You see the library, I think, as a semi-outside agency. But I say that our library employees are your employees the same as the school system. You just get a break because the state and federal government give a little bit to make up the difference. The library is an extension of your educational system," she said.

"If you sat in one of our libraries and observed what our librarians do to help out the citizens of Martinsville and Henry County, from infants and preschoolers all the way up through senior citizens like myself, you would see that they are some of the hardest working people you have ever seen. I implore you to support this increase," Caldwell said, and encouraged the board to "look ahead to next year as well because, as Rick has already said, our people are behind in terms of getting an equitable, fair salary for the work they actually do."

Christal Holloway, of Bassett, said that her family, including her home-schooled children, love their local library and its staff.

"For us, the library is more than just a place that has books. Our library has many activities for the kids, like movie time, LEGO night, and many others to keep the children engaged. Story time is one of our favorites," she said. "The library staff has played a big part in my children learning and loving to read books."

Holloway's 9-year-old granddaughter, Heaven, read a statement she wrote, clutching her spiral-bound notebook in her hands as she told the supervisors the library has helped her love reading and books.

"I love story time with Ms. Vicki," she said. "She reads books and shows me how to make crafts. We make friends and have fun there. Ms. Karen helps me find books that I like, and I love them and my library."

"I, just like the ones in front of me, am really beginning you to consider" increasing the library's funding, said Sherry Vestal, who represents the Blackberry District on the library board.

As a grandmother, Vestal said she gets to see firsthand the wonderful things the libraries do for children in the community, but particularly in Bassett, where she lives. "It's wonderful for all the children to be able to interact and learn all they can possibly learn at the library. The staff there are so accommodating and wonderful."

Vestal said she told her sister-in-law, who just retired as head librarian at Northwestern State University, what BRRL employees make, and "she said, 'oh my goodness, that's like poverty level.'"

Amy Bunn, of the Iriswood District, and the branch librarian at the Ridgeway library, said she did not intend to speak, "but if a 9-year-old can come up and speak for us, I think we can manage to speak for ourselves as well."

"My salary is not fantastic. It is a livable salary. I do make less than most people with Master's degrees, but I'm okay with that. I love my job and what I do. What's hurting me right now is that the Ridgeway branch library" is run by two part-time staff and herself, Bunn said.

When hiring part-time staff, "I need somebody that can do children's programming, order books, research on the internet,

help patrons at the computer, and is trustworthy, because they're working with money. We do have a lot of times that the library is covered alone, so they have to work independently as well.

"When it comes to all this, when I'm trying to hire somebody for this job, I can offer them \$11 an hour. Minimum wage. And that hurts because the only way I can keep the staff I have is to find somebody who's really dedicated to the idea of the library. I have the staff right now, but there's always things in life that come up (that incur additional expenses) and they have to go elsewhere," Bunn said.

When that happens, "everything gets torn up ... It's just so frustrating, and it's just going to get worse over the years," she said, referring to an earlier comment from Caldwell, who noted that library staff, particularly those at entry-level positions, could make more money working at Walmart or McDonalds.

"I have respect for the work those people are doing at Walmart. I know it's not an easy job, but I'm asking for a certain level of skills too that the people stocking the shelves at Walmart don't need to have, and when I can pay \$2 less an hour than they do, it's not right. It's not fair."

Expounding on another comment made by Caldwell about how the library is perceived as an entity separate from the county, Bunn said, "it's easy to see us as once removed," but she said she was speaking to someone who told her she would be getting a raise because they heard about the raises planned for county employees and assumed she was included.

"I said, 'no, we're not,' but that's what the people see us as, so I want to remind you of that, and that we are working on behalf of Henry County every day in our jobs. We love what we do, but don't ask us to sacrifice a living wage for that."

"We are the heart of our community," said Karen Barley, the branch manager for the Bassett library, who told the board that librarians help patrons with everything from making copies to filling out online job or Social Security applications. For the past 4-5 years, the library has tracked the number of jobs in the area it has helped people get.

"We are here in numbers because we are very afraid," said library chairman Betsy Haskins. "When

people come to look at Martinsville and Henry County, they want to know where the library is, they want to go see it, they want to see what is offered ... it's a positive for all localities to have a strong library system that is successful and that responds to the needs of the community," she said, adding that "libraries serve everybody from the smallest children to the oldest person" and that "the library is not the one that I grew up with 50 years ago. It is a multi-purpose entity, and if they're not doing it now and it's something that you want or need, they will be on it. I can guarantee that."

At the end of the public hearing, supervisor Garrett Dillard, of the Iriswood District, asked county staff, "if we later see that we want to propose changes, is that possible or does that have to take place at this very moment?"

County Administrator Tim Hall said staff generally took direction from the board the night of the public hearing, with the goal of adopting the budget at the next regular meeting, which is scheduled for May 24.

"Any changes under the total (advertised) amount that you wish us to bring you that day, we can do that, but the way the schedule is set up, we're to adopt in this month, appropriate in June, (and the budget becomes) effective July 1. So, the window is narrow," Hall said.

"If you wish to stay below the overall advertised budget and direct us to fill a gap from some other piece of the budget, we can certainly bring that to you. The overall number is pretty much what it is unless you want to go higher than that, then basically we start this whole process over" with a new budget presentation and new public hearing, he added.

"Once we get a budget, the budget's set. If you change the budget, you're

going to have to take from somebody," such as the Sheriff's Office, Public Safety, the school division, or another entity, Vice Chairman Joe Bryant, of the Collinsville District, said. "You've got to take from somebody to fill in that void we're talking about."

He acknowledged that "the library group tonight has made an excellent point in that they need more money. I don't know what we can do, but I'm going to take a look at it. It's hard to change the budget when the budget's set. It just is," Bryant added.

Dillard said he felt like the experience was akin to speaking with a telemarketer in that "you hear it and you have to respond to it instantly."

"You've had it (the budget) since we presented it," Hall replied.

"But we just heard them tonight," Dillard responded.

Hall noted that certain contingency amounts are built into the budget.

Supervisor Ryan Zehr, of the Ridgeway District, said there is \$100,000 in the general contingency and \$150,000 in the fuel contingency. He said should the board use contingency funds to cover the additional request from the library, and then surpass the amount held in contingency during the fiscal year, funds from reserves could be used to cover the overages.

"I would be open to doing that because they have had level funding for many years," Zehr said.

Supervisor Debra Buchanan, of the Horsepasture District, asked Ward if he had presented to Martinsville and Patrick County already. Ward responded that he had, but he said he had not yet received a response from Martinsville. Patrick County agreed only to level funding after first attempting to cut library funding by 11 percent. However, he

said, he could return to ask for additional funds.

"So, what you're actually needing is \$65,711 over all three jurisdictions?" Buchanan asked. Ward confirmed the number was accurate.

Chairman Jim Adams, of the Blackberry District, noted that salaries are a recurring cost.

According to Hall, Finance Director Darrell Jones suggested the "cleanest way" to fund the library's request, should the board choose to do so, would be to adopt the budget as presented. Then when the budget goes into effect on July 1, direct staff to take a certain amount of money out of contingency and put it toward a specific line item.

"That's the cleanest way to do it. So, if there is some consideration for doing that, we will bring this to you at the May meeting to adopt as presented, then you can give us the caveat that on July 1, you want us to transfer X amount of money from whatever pot to whatever pot. That's the cleanest and most efficient way to do it."

"That will give us time to find out what Patrick County and the City of Martinsville are going to do," said supervisor Tommy Slaughter, of the Reed Creek District.

Martinsville City Council members recently agreed to fund half of the library's requested increase, or \$6,571, with the caveat that, if Henry and Patrick counties agree to fully fund their portions, the city would follow suit.

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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# OBITUARIES

## Gary Dean Joyce

Gary Dean Joyce passed away on Thursday, May 5, 2022.

He was born on April 23, 1933, in Fieldale, Virginia to the late John Everett Joyce and Mattie Gravelly Joyce. He was also preceded in death by his sister, Irene J. Edwards, and brothers James E. "Red" Joyce, William Wallace Joyce, John Alvis Joyce, and Jesse B. "Snake Eyes" Joyce.

Dean is survived by his wife of 65 years, Loretta Pruitt Joyce, daughters and sons-in-law, Susan Joyce Harbour & Dennis of Pleasant Grove and Amy Joyce McCurdy & Jeff of Baldwin, GA, and grandsons, Andrew (Lorita), and Kahlil, both of GA, and many nieces and nephews.

After graduating from Fieldale High School, he attended High Point College before entering the United States Army. Upon his return he graduated from Elon College and received his Master's degree



from the University of Virginia.

During his career as an educator, he worked in several Henry County schools. Dean served as principal of Mt. Olivet Elementary School and Figsboro Elementary School before retiring in 1989.

Dean was a lifelong member and Deacon of Fieldale Baptist Church. He was a former member of the Collinsville Lions Club and Rangeley Ruritans. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and was an avid golfer after retiring.

A graveside service was held on Tuesday, May 10, 2022, at Roselawn Burial Park. The Rev. Allen Jackson officiated.

Donations may be made to Fieldale Baptist Church, P.O. Box 98, Fieldale, VA 24089, or The Cure Alzheimer's Fund at <https://curealz.org>.

Norris Funeral Services, Inc. & Crematory of Martinsville is serving the family.

## Marion Lorraine Thompson Bowen Roberts

Marion Lorraine Thompson Bowen Roberts, 88, of Sandys, Bermuda passed away Wednesday, May 4, 2022, in Collinsville, Virginia. She was born March 7, 1934, in Hamilton, Bermuda to the late Stanley and Anna Thompson. She was a member of White Hill Gospel Tabernacle, was a missionary to Africa, St. Vincents, and Aruba and was very active in the church. She enjoyed visiting the nursing home at least two times a week.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her second husband Anthony Roberts; first husband, Austin Bowen; brothers Calvin Thompson, Lancelot Thompson, Earlston Thompson, and Kenneth Thompson.



She is survived by her daughter, Joy Bowen; son, Austin Bowen; sisters, Iona Brangman, Winnifred Thompson, Rosina Thompson and Maureen Darryl; brothers, Colin Thompson, Albert Thompson, Stanley Thompson and Millard Thompson; grandchildren, Michael Fields, LaToya Fields, Jan'ee Bowen, Janelle Bowen, Jason Bowen

Whitney Walker, Brittany Walker, and Courtney Walker; and a host of great-grandchildren; nieces, nephews, and friends.

A service will be held in Bermuda.

Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

## Curtis Michael Lawson

Curtis Michael Lawson, 52, of Collinsville, Virginia passed away April 19, 2022, at his residence. He was born May 29, 1969, in Martinsville, Virginia to the late Dewey Akers Lawson and Mildred Emma Spencer Lawson.

Growing up, during football season Curtis enjoyed a healthy rivalry with his father who cheered for the Dallas Cowboys and his brother who cheered for the Washington Redskins, while he cheered for the Philadelphia Eagles, it kept life interesting at game time. Curtis also enjoyed camping in his truck camper. He was a graduate of Laurel Park High School.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a sister, Theresa Lawson Corns; grandparents, Virgil and Carrie



Martin Lawson and Charlie and Delma Gay Wagner Spencer.

He is survived by a sister, Lisa Turney (Danny) and a brother, Dewey Edwin Lawson (Brenda). He is also survived by one niece, Kayla Turney and six nephews, Derrick Turney (Elizabeth), Devin Turney, Robert Lawson, Mitchell Lawson (Denise), David White (Sharon) and Robert Smith

(Tiffany). He was also survived by many beloved aunts, uncles and cousins, five great nieces and a nephew.

Services are pending. Service times will be announced in the near future.

Wright Funeral Service and Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

Norma T. Witt, 68, of Martinsville, VA passed away on May 6, 2022. She was born on February 26, 1954, to the late Frank and June Turner in Bassett, VA. In addition to her parents, she is preceded in death by her husband, Robert Witt.

Norma was a member of First Baptist Church of Ridgeway and was known for her beautiful smile, her love of music, and her gift of playing the piano.

She is survived by her children, Hope Perry (Jason) of Spencer, VA, and Tonya McPeek (Shane) of Martinsville, VA; stepchildren, Debbie (Eddie) Church and Bob (Lacy) Witt. Norma was blessed with grandchildren, Nathan and Sadie



Perry, Aaron, and Levi McPeek, as well as step-grandchildren, James Robert Church & Michelle Adams, Christopher, Dustin & Patrick Witt.

The funeral was held May 9, 2022, at Mount Hermon Church of the Brethren in Bassett, VA, officiated by Noel Naff and Rick Randall. Burial was private.

Donations may be sent to Mount Hermon Church of the Brethren Cemetery Fund, 144 Mt Hermon Church Rd, Bassett, VA 24055.

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

## Mary Frye Willard

Mary Frye Willard, of Axton, VA passed away on Thursday, May 5, 2022, at Sovah Health of Martinsville. She was born on May 13, 1951, in Axton, VA to the late Moir Frye and Marie Barker Frye.

Mrs. Willard attended Mercy Crossing Church.

She is survived by her husband, Roy Alvin Willard of the home; daughter, Glenda Annette Willard Lawson (Mitch) of Wake Forest, NC, and son, Wayne Alan Willard (Andrea) of Axton, VA; sisters, Joyce Frye Reynolds, and Nancy Frye Willard both of Axton, VA; brother, Lester "LT" Frye of Axton, VA. Also surviving are her grandchildren, Peyton Lawson, Alexander "Zander" Lawson, Camryn Lawson, Elijah "Eli" Willard,



and Marisa Willard.

Visitation will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 14, 2022, at Mercy Crossing Church and other times will be at the home of Wayne and Andrea Willard, 150 Royal Oak Dr., Axton, VA 24054. The funeral will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2022, at 1 p.m. at Mercy Crossing Church, with Pastor Tim Nuckles officiating. Burial will be at Roselawn Burial Park.

Memorials may be made to the National Kidney Foundation, 30 East 33rd Street, New York, NY 10016.

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

## Bradley Ray Hall

Bradley Ray Hall, 53, of Henry, Virginia passed away Sunday, May 8, 2022, at his residence. He was born June 29, 1969, in Eden, North Carolina to Wanda Gee Hall and the late Henry Hall.

In his free time, he enjoyed fishing and raising chickens. He loved spending time with his family and friends. He was good hearted and a fun guy to

be around.

He is survived by his brother, Tony Hall; a host of cousins, other family and friends; and a special cousin, Melissa Wright.

Services will be private. Wright Funeral Service and Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

## Betty Belcher Crowder

Betty Belcher Crowder "Sis", 74, of Bassett, passed away on Saturday, April 30, 2022, at Carilion-Roanoke Memorial Hospital. She was born in Clifton Forge on September 22, 1947, to the late Judson Douthat Belcher and the late Frances Johnson Belcher. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by three brothers, Jerry Belcher, Rolen "Tiny" Belcher and J.D. "Brother" Belcher.

Betty is survived by a son, Troy Crowder (April) of Collinsville; grandson, Alex Crowder (Ana) of Collinsville; granddaughters, Emily Crowder (Fiancé Nick Fontane)



of Collinsville; great-grandsons, Oliver Crowder and Everett Crowder; brother, Tony Belcher (Traci) of Clifton Forge; sisters, Linda May (Ralph) of Covington and Carol Entsminger (Mike) of Clifton Forge; numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

The funeral was on May 6, 2022, at Bassett Funeral Service Chapel. Rev. Tim Wood officiated. Burial was

Henry Memorial Park in Bassett. Online condolences may be made by visiting [www.bassettfuneralservice.com](http://www.bassettfuneralservice.com). Bassett Funeral Service is serving the Crowder family.

## Frances Arlaus

Frances Arlaus, 81, of Martinsville, Virginia passed away Sunday, May 8, 2022, at her home.

Services will be held in New Jersey at a later date.

Wright Funeral Service and Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

## Ada N. Carter

Ada N. Carter, 80, of Martinsville, Virginia passed away Thursday, May 5, 2022, at Carilion Roanoke Memorial. She was born November 4, 1941, in Martinsville, Virginia to the late Frederick Carter and Alma Watkins Carter.

Ada was a graduate of Albert Harris High School in 1963. She worked in secondary education and secretarial science and was a dedicated employee of the Martinsville City School System for more than 40 years. She was a member of both United In Christ Ministries and Mount Sinai Apostle Holiness Churches. She loved singing, playing the tambourine, and reading her bible. She said she was putting her time in, pay day was coming soon.



In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her sisters, Bertha Hairston, Jean Clemons, Joan Brown, and Janice Kirby; brothers, Fredrick Carter, Jr., Nathaniel Carter, Sr., Howard Carter, Sr., and Timothy Carter, Sr.

She is survived by her daughter, Semeka "Mimi" Hairston; sons, Frankie Carter, Stacy Carter (Stephanie), and Lyndon Carter; sisters, Siberia Hairston, and Senora Mahan; eight grandchildren; ten great grandchildren.

The funeral was held on May 12, 2022, at Mount Sinai Apostle Holiness Church. Burial was at Carver Memorial Gardens.

Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

## Suzanne Elizabeth Branch

Suzanne Elizabeth Branch, 53, of Patrick Springs, passed away Friday, May 6, 2022, at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. She was born November 11, 1968, in Martinsville, Virginia to the late Bobby Wade Kendrick and Dulcie Maude Hunt Kendrick Coon.

Suzanne enjoyed spending time in the mountains, doing Penny Press word searches, and eating at Mexican Restaurants. She loved her grandchildren and her dogs, Dixie and Pugsley.

Suzanne is survived by her husband, Alvin Branch; sons, Daniel Branch (Dominique Marie), and Chad Branch (Amanda); brother, Greg Wade Kendrick; grandchildren, Joshua Trent, Emree Branch, Leyin Branch, Rachel Branch, and Cullen Branch

Services will be private. Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at [www.wrightfuneralservices.net](http://www.wrightfuneralservices.net).

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# CLASSIFIEDS



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### HELP WANTED

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**ORDER OF PUBLICATION** Case No. CL21000783-00  
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104  
HENRY CIRCUIT COURT  
3160 Kings Mountain Rd., 3rd Floor, Martinsville, VA 24112

CARLTON MCCLARENCE v. CRISTINE MCCLARENCE  
P.O. Box 16103, Richmond, VA 23222

The object of this suit is to:  
OBTAIN A DIVORCE A VINCULO MATRIMONII  
It is ORDERED that CRISTINE MCCLARENCE appear at the above-named court and protect her interests on or before June 26, 2022.

April 27, 2022

*James J. Albrecht*  
JUDGE IN CLERK

### COUNTY OF HENRY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings has been scheduled for **May 25, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd., Collinsville, Virginia. The purpose of these public hearings is to receive citizen input into the possible issuance of Special Use Permits for the following cases.

#### Case S-22-08 Kirk Cotter d/b/a Slainte Ranch

A request for a Special Use Permit has been received under Section 21-302 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the operation of a wedding venue and event center. The property is located at 1215 Collins Rd., in the Iriswood District and shown on Tax Map 34.8/72. The property is zoned Agricultural District A-1.

#### Case S-22-09 Sarah Evans and Danysse Pirrung

A request for a Special Use Permit was received under Section 21-302 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the establishment of a campground facility to accommodate up to 10 sites per acre. The property is approximately 5-acres, located at 87 Frith Dr. in the Ridgeway District, is zoned Agricultural District A-1, as shown on Tax Map 52.4/34G.

The applications for these requests may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Lee H. Clark, AICP  
Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

## Puffs

from page 1

This class of students finally presented the perfect opportunity.

"I had a lot of kids who had all these shows stolen from them because of the pandemic," he said, "and they were all going to be in my advance drama class this year." So, he made the decision to do something he'd never done before—do the show with a class, rehearsing during school rather than after school.

"I've never done it that way before, so it was a struggle. But I keep reminding myself that it's a struggle that's going to be worth it in the end."

Working with the students make the struggle worthwhile as well, he said.

"I have such a great group of students. They are some of the people that I look forward to coming and seeing every day. I look forward to when we get to fourth block and we can start working on this. This group of kids is one of the hardest working, most talented groups of kids that I have had in a very long time."

Some of the underclassmen, he said, were initially hesitant about being in the production, and now are eager to participate. He has enjoyed watching them come out of their shells. "I see what I can do. I see what I can be."

A lot of the class, Dunn said, are seniors, "and I'm going to miss them terribly when they graduate a week after the show."

One of those seniors is Will Ortega, who plays the dual roles of Cedric and Mr. Voldy.

"I love the message of the

show," Ortega said. That "no matter what, you always belong. You're never just put somewhere, you always have something," resonated with him. "I try to keep it with me. Just always be happy being yourself."

In the character of Cedric, Ortega said he found a great deal of optimism.

"He's always optimistic about whatever comes his way. He never beats down on himself or others for what went wrong. Rather, he always tries to look on the bright side of any situation. He has confidence in himself that is easy to spread to others, and allows other people to have hope, no matter what."

His favorite line from the character is, "failure is just another form of practice," another lesson Ortega said he carries with him. "If I fail, there's always a way to improve, and it's just a way of learning more."

Mr. Voldy, Ortega's other character, is not quite as nice.

"He's just evil," the young actor said. "He's overall not a good dude, but I get to have fun with the character by doing weird voices and weird movements," which Ortega said he finds incredibly fun.

When he was an incoming freshman, Ortega said he'd never even considered theater. An upperclassman convinced him to try, telling him it would not only be fun, but also boost his confidence. He signed up for drama in his freshman year, and has stuck with it ever since, with plans to pursue directing in college.

The role of Wayne is played by

another senior, Landon George, who takes on the role having only been in one other show—"Chicago,"—during his high school career.

"There are a lot of great aspects to the show," George said. "It's a really good underdog story. It starts out really goofy, gets kind of sad, makes you cry a little bit, then you start laughing again. It's really fun and it's incredible to have your own take on your characters."

The journey of his character may sound strikingly familiar to anyone familiar with the story of another boy wizard. Wayne, George said, is an orphan who "goes to this certain school of magic and magic" after being taken from England to grow up in New Mexico.

"He spends his entire 7-years at school trying to become something that he probably isn't. Looking at Harry, or Potter, in a certain limelight, but also with a certain disgust. He's always trying to one-up everything that anybody else is doing. He's trying to become Harry."

"I feel like 'Puffs' is a very inclusive show," said Lauralee Robinson, a sophomore who plays Leanne and a number of other characters, including Ginny (Wayne's crush), Frenchie ("she's a French person and she says 'baguette' a lot," Robinson said), and wizarding school co-founder Helga.

Leanne, she said, is "a very energetic character," raised by her grandparents in a cabin. As the first person to venture from that cabin on her own, "she's trying

to discover who she is because she's been secluded all of her life. Everyone has some sort of connection with Leanne."

Leanne, it seems, also has a whimsical side, as illustrated by one of the lines Robinson shared from her character (and delivered in an excellent British accent), "I was having a dream that I was a unicorn, only I didn't have a horn, and I was eating hay."

While the character is generally "one of those people that just goes with the flow," Robinson said there is a moment in the show in which Leanne makes an important stand.

"At the end, once everybody is deciding to abandon something they've been involved in their entire life, she stands up and says, 'I want to stay. I want to help defend our certain school of magic,' and she motivates everybody else to join her."

Robinson said she hopes the audience realizes how much work she and the rest of the cast and crew put into making the show happen.

"I want to see them with tearful eyes and joyful smiles," George said.

"We want them to have fun, laugh, but also learn something," Dunn added.

During the two months of rehearsals, the cast, crew, and even the director, have all learned a little bit along the way, both from each other and from the play. And the Puffs themselves, at the end of the show, realize they've learned something too, if one of Wayne's lines is

any indication: "Did we really spend 7 years at magic school to learn that love is the best magic there is?"

General admission tickets for the show are \$8 and available online at [www.onthestage.tickets/show/magna-vista-high-school/puffs-83847/](http://www.onthestage.tickets/show/magna-vista-high-school/puffs-83847/)

The cast of "Puffs" includes: Landon George (Wayne Hopkins)

Own Amos (Narrator)

Taylor Holland (Oliver Rivers)

MacKenzie Morrison (Megan Jones)

William Ortega (Cedric/Mr. Voldy)

Briana Tatum (Ernie Mac and others)

Kennedy Coleman (Hannah and others)

TiQuise Fitzgerald (J Finch Fletchley and others)

Lorelei Edmonds (Susie Bones and others)

Danielle Agnew (Sally Perks and others)

Lauralee Robinson (Leanne and others)

Maeve McCulloch (Harry)

The "Puffs" crew members are: Mallory Burton (stage manager)

Petra Balderas (set and costumes/Sal)

Damian Lovette (set and props/Death Buddy #1)

Racheal Jones (costumes and puppets/Ric Gryff)

Olivia Reeves (costumes and puppets/Rowena)

Madison Willard (set and props)

Bryan Hird (sound)

Trinity Aldrich (lighting and light design)

## Approval

from page 1

ity it could fully fund the request.

Council member Chad Martin, who made the motion to fund half, amended his motion at the suggestion of council member Danny Turner to state the city will fully fund its part if Henry and Patrick counties agree to fully fund their respective portions.

"Chad went to bat for you in closed session," Turner told Ward and board members.

Last week, Mayor Kathy Lawson noted the budgetary constraints, and said that she didn't see where the city would be able to fund the request.

"The library was a safe haven for me when I didn't have a job," Martin said Tuesday night. "It was somewhere where I did my resumes, cover letters. It was a happy place to be, and it's somewhere where my mother takes my nephews and they have an amazing time. It is some-

where, when we would leave the homeless shelter, I wondered where all those people went at the homeless shelter, they're there at a warm, safe place at the library on the computer or reading, not on the streets, not robbing people. They're somewhere safe. You all do amazing work."

Council member Tammy Pearson offered to forego the budgeted 10 percent stipend increase currently budgeted for city council members to help with funding the library request, but Lawson said, "typically what we do here is we allocate, and then we figure out where we're going to take it from. So, that is definitely a recommendation."

After the meeting, Martin said his request for only half the library's requested funding was strategic. "When you start getting a feel of where everybody's going to be, you realize you might not be able to get the full

amount, so you ask for half of it. I would rather ask for half and get a 'yes,' than ask for all of it and get a 'no,'" he said. But, he noted, "even the full amount they're asking is nowhere near what they actually deserve. It's nowhere near."

Though council unanimously approved the budget on first reading, discussion of a number of possible additional budgetary actions will take place on Wednesday, May 18, during another budget work session in council chambers beginning at 6 p.m.

At that session, council is expected to consider providing some relief on this year's personal property tax bills, which are expected to increase over last year. Commissioner of Revenue Ruth Easley has said the values of Martinsville's fleet of new and used vehicles increased by an average of 26.14 percent for 2022.

Easley recommended

council consider applying an assessment ratio for passenger cars, trucks, and motorcycles to help ease the burden on the city's taxpayers.

Lawson on Tuesday said she would like council to consider applying at least a 5 percent ratio, which would decrease the total value assessment of the fleet from \$74,490,990 to \$70,766,441, resulting in an average personal property tax bill of \$209.26.

At its May 18 work session, council also will take up the question of providing a salary supplement to the public defender's office.

Public Defender Sandra Haley requested a total of \$29,638.50, which she divided proportionally between the city, Henry, and Patrick counties based on the percentage of cases originating from each locality. She requested a total of \$11,262.63 from Martinsville.

Martin made a motion

to fund half of Haley's request, but Lawson questioned whether that amount would really make an impact, particularly since none of the other localities have agreed to partial funding Haley's request.

"We have state agencies that the state doesn't fill their own obligations and responsibilities to," Lawson said. "When we give additional funding to a state agency, are we enabling the state not to do their job? That's the only issue I have with that is that the state is not stepping up to the plate to do what they need to do for these very valuable people who do remarkable jobs. That's why we wanted to put it in our next legislative agenda."

Council also may discuss the proposed 10 percent stipend increase for its members, which Pearson said she did not believe council should approve.

In other matters, the council:

\* **R e c o g n i z e d** Martinsville Middle School 7th grader Jordin Hernandez Machuca, who won the Virginia Municipal League's Region 2 "If I Were Mayor" essay contest. Machuca wrote about making public transportation more affordable by slightly increasing local taxes.

\* Presented a proclamation recognizing May 15 as Peace Officers' Memorial Day and May 15 through 21 as National Police Week.

\* Presented a proclamation recognizing the 50th anniversary of Piedmont Community Services.

\* Adopted on second reading Ordinance 2022-3 enacting or amending certain sections of the city code regarding the use of electric scooters. The city is considering a partnership with Bird to bring electric scooters to Martinsville.



# Regional community needs assessment underway

The Southern Virginia Child Advocacy Center provides victim services in the counties of Pittsylvania, Patrick, Franklin, Henry and the city of Martinsville, and served more than 700 children in 2021.

To plan, develop, and maintain services that address the needs of children and families impacted by family and community-based violence, the agency needs to better

understand what the communities it serves identify as important, and plan to accomplish that by assessing needs as they relate to the resources currently available in our region.

"We need your input. If you live or work in any of these localities, please complete a community needs assessment survey," according to a release.

Each link listed designates a

locality. Complete more than one survey if you live in one locality, but work in another. "The needs you see through your employment may be different from what you see where you live. The survey only takes about 5 minutes and it is crucial in helping us determine what our region needs and how we can help. Your opinion matters," the release stated.

Franklin County - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CSFMS65>

Pittsylvania County - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/69XNVSB>

Henry County - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZFTRL7Q>

Patrick County - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZFXMDVR>

Martinsville City - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/692DYKX>

This information gathered from these surveys are the first step in

developing a framework and strategic plan to best utilize our skills, resources, and partnerships effectively and in a financially responsible and creative capacity.

For more information on the Southern Virginia Child Advocacy Center, visit [www.southernvacac.org](http://www.southernvacac.org), [www.facebook.com/svacac4kids](https://www.facebook.com/svacac4kids), or email us at [info@southernvacac.org](mailto:info@southernvacac.org). The surveys will close on May 13.

## Clean Up

from page 1

cleaning the boiler room, planting grass, and performing other tasks to help move the center's renovation efforts along, while wearing shirts emblazoned with the Bassett name and the slogan, "the difference it makes" (a play on words, referencing the IT department).

The work is part of Bassett's long legacy of giving back to the community said Andy Doss, Bassett's manager of business intelligence and application development, who also serves as Bassett's unofficial historian.

Bassett leadership "likes to participate in some sort of project" each year, though doing so has been difficult the past few years due to the pandemic, he said. "We all had been aware of the need down here," and agreed to spend their community service day working at the center.

While not everyone working that day grew up in the area, Doss said some had memories of coming to the community center when it was open. He recalled taking swimming lessons in the pool.

The community center itself is "a byproduct of the leadership, back in its day, felt like it was important that the company gives back to the community in some way. That's a driving factor for us too in what we're doing here. It's our way of representing Bassett

Furniture to give back to the community as well," Doss said.

"You've got guys like J.D. Bassett and (current Chief Executive Officer) Rob Spilman, (and) the community's really important to them, and they pass that down to the rest of the company. It's really part of our DNA that Bassett gives back to the community," Lead Business Analyst Mark Woomer said.

Doss recalled an interview J.D. Bassett, Jr. gave at the grand opening of the community center in June 1960. In it, Bassett spoke of his father, J.D. Bassett, Sr., who told him and W.M. Bassett (who the center is named after), that they should always strive to give back to the community: "Share the fruits of your labor, and ours, with the people in all walks of life regardless of the job they might have held."

That spirit of giving back "is still going to this day," Woomer said.

"There's a big hope that, even though it's just a few of us, we can make some kind of a difference today, and maybe our example will be followed by some other folks too," Doss added.

A number of others were on hand that day to serve the volunteers a hot dog lunch and to show their support of the revitalization efforts. Among them was the 7' 8" for-

mer Harlem Globetrotter George Bell, who came from Durham, N.C. to cook the hot dogs.

Bell said he came as a favor to Michael Jarrett, one of the organizers of the event, and a member of Save the Bassett Community Center.

Del. Wren Williams, R-Stuart, and his legislative aid, Addison Merryman were plating the hot dogs cooked by Bell, as Thatcher Stanley from the office of U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Salem, poured drinks.

Williams said Bassett was probably the biggest community in his district in Henry County, and he wanted to come to support the area.

"I've driven past this plenty of times, and I like to see what's going on now and the improvements that are being made," he said. "It's very exciting, and I'd love to be able to help in any way I can at the local level, but also at the state level."

As just one example, Williams said he could possibly provide state assistance with matching funds for federal dollars to assist with asbestos abatement. "You never know. You can at least ask," he said.

Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry said that his daughters sometimes came to play in the center's pool before the facility shut down. The possible



Former Harlem Globetrotter George Bell (far left), Del. Wren Williams, Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry, Thatcher Stanley of Rep. Morgan Griffith's office, and Williams' legislative aide Addison Merryman speak with Bassett Community Center board president Linda Crabtree (center) while preparing a hot dog lunch for the I.T. staff from Bassett Furniture who worked to help clean and refurbish the Bassett Community Center.

reopening of the center would be "super for our area" to have a place "where young people can come—like the sign out front says, no alcohol, no drugs—it encourages athleticism. It's an older generation investing in a younger generation. It's nothing but a positive. I applaud their efforts to get it back up and running again."

Sharon Shepherd, deputy director of the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce, said the center is a chamber member, which means the organization can help inform the public about what's going on with the reopening effort.

"There are so many people in our community here that have memories

of the Bassett Community Center and may now know that this is going on, so we can certainly help promote and hopefully get enough people involved that the center gets back to what it used to be and what everybody remembers as such an important part of the community," she said.

"It's like it's coming back to life," she said as she surveyed the ongoing work effort.

Jarrett offered his thanks to those who volunteered their time at the cleanup.

"Bassett Furniture has been a very strong supporter of the community center for many years," he said, and to have people from the company interact with his group was a wonderful experience.

"They did a ton of

work," he said. "After the dust settled, at the end of the day, we were very impressed with the things that got done."


He said his organization hopes to have the pool reopened this summer. As previously reported, the group hopes to have the indoor facilities ready to welcome the public sometime in 2023.


Donations to the Bassett Community Center's revitalization effort can be made online at <https://gofund.me/59f456eb> or by searching for Save the BCC Pool on GoFundMe.com. Donations may be mailed to Bassett Community Center, c/o Bassett Furniture Industries, P.O. Box 626, Bassett VA 24055.

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