

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, May 28, 2022

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Jeff Hatcher, an eight-year veteran with the Henry County Sheriff's Office, said deputies respond to a higher number of service calls than nearby localities and are paid less for their service.

Sheriff, deputies, residents lobby for increased pay

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry, on- and off-duty deputies, plain clothes investigators and residents implored the Henry County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday to increase pay and create step raises to help retention efforts.

Among those addressing the board was Jeff Hatcher, a criminal investigator who has been with the sheriff's office for eight years. He said he looked at starting pay for new hires and officers with experience in surrounding jurisdictions and found that the county paid less than those other jurisdictions.

"So, then I asked myself, maybe we're just not worth the extra money, right," he said, and so he compared the workload of county offi-

cers to that of their counterparts in other localities.

He found that Henry County deputies respond to twice as many calls for service as the Martinsville Police Department and answer nearly twice as many violent calls for service, as well as conducting more traffic stops, but are paid less than city law enforcement. Additionally, Henry County was second only to Franklin County in terms of arrests made for serious offenses.

Hatcher then held up a photo of a School Resource Officer (SRO) with blood streaming down her face. He identified her as Deputy Ross, who was injured while trying to get mental health help for a suicidal teenage girl.

"By show of hands, how many of you have had to fight a suspect," he asked, turning to the officers gath-

See **Increased Pay**, page 3



Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society board member W.C. Fowlkes chats with WWII veteran Edward Joyce about his experiences fighting in the war. The discussion was filmed for the documentary "A Conversation with American Heroes from Martinsville & Henry County," which is set to premier on Sunday.

Historical Society to premiere veterans' documentary film

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will premiere a new documentary, "A Conversation with American Heroes from Martinsville & Henry County," on Sunday, May 29, at 3 p.m. in the Walker Theatre of Patrick & Henry Community College.

Commissioned by the Virginia World War I and World War II Commemoration Commission, the documentary was produced by the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society, the Virginia Museum

of Natural History, and Rudy's Girl Media.

Interviewers W.C. Fowlkes and Joe Keiper spoke with a number of local World War II veterans about their experiences and memories serving during the war. Those interviewed for the documentary were Mary Bull, Leonard Hairston, Edward Joyce, Clifford Henry Kesler, Jesse Creed Maxey, Chester Moore, William Plonk, Sr., Arnold Prillaman, John Redd, Talmadge Seay, Bruce Spencer, Howard White, and Andrew Wright.

Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society President John Phillips

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Funds shifted from schools to provide tax relief

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

In a 4-1 vote, Martinsville City Council on Tuesday approved on second reading a budget ordinance.

Council member Tammy Pearson voted against the measure, after expressing concern about the lack of a budgeted amount for the city's reversion fees as well as the decision to reduce school funding by \$350,000.

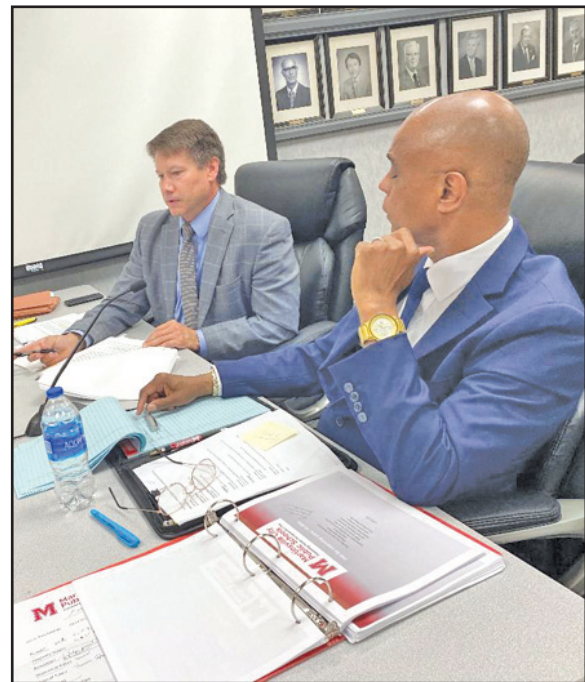
Pearson was referring to shifting of local funds from city schools to give residents a tax break, with the idea that the school division can use federal funds to plug the hole.

The council on May 18 approved an 80 percent tax assessment ratio to help mitigate the effects

of a historic appreciation of vehicle valuations and decrease taxes by 20 percent. However, the relief comes at a \$350,000 reduction in city funds to the school division, a loss council hopes can be funded with the schools' pandemic relief funds and which it promised to repay if those relief funds could not be used.

The two-hour discussion on May 18 included not only council members, but also Schools Superintendent Dr. Zebedee Talley and the division's Director of Administrative Services, Travis Clemons, as officials broached the possibility of using federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) dollars to replace city funding.

Discussion at that meeting included com-



Travis Clemons (left) explained restrictions the schools have in using federal pandemic-related ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds. City Council reduced funding to the school division to provide some personal property tax relief for the upcoming year. Should the division be unable to cover the reduction with ESSER funds, council has assured Clemons and Schools Superintendent Dr. Zebedee Talley (right) it will use general funds to make the school budget whole.

See **Funding**, page 6

PCS marks 50 years with ceremony at new center

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

State and local officials joined in the celebration of Piedmont Community Services' (PCS) 50th anniversary on May 20 at a grand opening of the Pathways to Recovery Center.

Though the center was established in Oct. 2020 and temporarily operated in Uptown Martinsville, it has now found a permanent home in the former American National University Building, at

905 Memorial Boulevard North in Martinsville.

The new space will allow for expansion, said Director of Operations Kippy Cassell. Usually, when the agency moves into a space, it is immediately full. However, the new facility has 32,000-square-feet of usable space on two floors.

Currently, only the first floor is being used, he said, adding the new space "gives us some room to grow, with lots of dreams and plans for the upstairs," Cassell said.

State Sen. Bill Stanley, R-Moneta,

said the building "is reborn to change lives, to make a difference, and to be there when no one else is there in the desperation of addiction."

Stanley quipped that whenever PCS Executive Director "Greg Preston calls me, I come running. Otherwise, he calls me again."

But on a serious note, he said Preston and his staff "do so much with so little. The state fails ... to give you the money, and we

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City, county, and state officials gathered with staff from Piedmont Community Services (PCS) to celebrate 50 years of the community service board with a grand opening ceremony for the Pathways to Recovery Center, located on Memorial Boulevard in Martinsville. The center will provide a no-barrier point of access to recovery supports.

Westside residents express displeasure with reversion, Five Points neighborhood

Callie Hietala
Staff writer

About 40 people filled the library at Albert Harris Elementary School

Monday night for Martinsville City Council's Westside neighborhood meeting. Several city residents used the opportunity to express their displeasure with council, the new

Five Points neighborhood, and share their thoughts on the city's proposed reversion.

See **Reversion**, page 3



Minister Malvester Muhammad told council members he did not believe the city should revert during a Westside neighborhood meeting hosted by city council. "Martinsville can make it on its own," he said.

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FOR MORE UPDATES



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Saturday, 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 silbies, 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.

The Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department (17815 A.L. Philpott Highway, Ridgeway) will host a country buffet breakfast from 6-10 a.m. The cost for adults is \$8, children under 10 are \$4. All carry outs are \$8. The buffet includes eggs, bacon, sausage, country ham, grits, biscuits and gravy, and apples.

Sunday, May 29

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will premiere 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.

Tuesday, May 31 through Tuesday, June 21

Patrick & Henry Community College hosts Introduction to Microsoft Office 2016 Suite. Classes will be held from 8:30 until 12:30 p.m. The cost is \$175. Pre-registration is required. To register, visit ph.augusoft.net or call (276) 656-0260.

Thursday, June 2

The American Red Cross

will host a blood drive at the Martinsville Elks Lodge (300 Fairy Street Ext.) from 12-6 p.m. To register for your donation appointment, visit redcrossblood.org.

Friday, June 3

Fido's Finds (119 East Main Street, Martinsville) will host a big basement sale from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. to benefit the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA. Thousands of items will be at bargain basement prices. The only thing hotter than the temperature are the low prices!

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.

The Blue Ridge Regional Library will host a special, old Hollywood red carpet event, Movie and Mocktails with Marilyn. Step back in time into the opulence of old Hollywood for an evening of glamour, enchantment, and elegance at the Collinsville branch library. Festivities will include an old Hollywood costume contest, signature non-alcoholic mocktails, old Hollywood movie trivia, a special viewing of a classic Marilyn Monroe movie, door prizes, and more. Registration is required for this free event. To register, call (276) 647-1112.

A "Stop the Violence and Say No to Drugs" Walkathon will take place in Martinsville. Participants will meet in the Big Chair parking lot in Uptown Martinsville at 11 a.m. with the walk beginning at noon and ending at Baldwin Park, where speakers will discuss their experience with addiction and Piedmont Community Services will provide information on substance abuse and recovery services. There will be a live band and free food and beverages. Anyone interested in volunteering or donating to the walkathon should contact Anthea Barbour at (276) 806-0932.

The Fieldale-Collinsville

Rescue Squad (1827 Daniels Creek Road) will host a Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser from 7-11 a.m. Plates are \$5 (cash or check only) for both dine-in and to-go and include 3 pancakes, 2 sausage links, 2 eggs, and a choice of juice, coffee, or water. The funds raised will be used to buy much-needed equipment for the squad.

Fido's Finds (119 East Main Street, Martinsville) will host a big basement sale from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. to benefit the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA. Thousands of items will be at bargain basement prices.

Wednesday, June 8

The Virginia Department of Veteran Services will host an in-person Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Employer Certification Training and Veteran Resource event at the Patrick & Henry Community College MET Complex (67 Motorsports Drive, Martinsville) from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Registration, lunch, parking, and certification are all free. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/V3TrainJune2022>.

Thursday, June 9

The Henry County School Board will hold its regular monthly meeting beginning at 9 a.m. in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the Henry County Administration Building (3300 Kings Mountain Road, Collinsville.)

Friday, June 10

It's Music Night at the Spencer-Penn Centre. The Country Boys will play in Alumni Hall. Gate opens at 5 p.m. and music begins at 6:20. Admission is a \$5 donation. Social distancing will be required and masks when that is not possible. Concessions will be sold.

Friday, June 17

The American Red Cross will host a blood drive at Blackberry Baptist Church (3241 Stones Dairy Road, Bassett) from 1-6

p.m. To register for your donation appointment, visit redcrossblood.org.

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.

Patrick & Henry Community College is organizing a virtual Leadership Learning Community! If you have leadership questions, P&HCC can connect you with answers through this virtual community. Participants have the opportunity to collaborate and brainstorm current, real-time challenges and successes with fellow leaders while learning from each other or gaining insights from professionals skilled in areas of concern. Sessions will be held from 4-5 p.m. every other Wednesday through June 22. Prices range from \$225 for 12 sessions all the way to \$25 for individual sessions. For more information or to register, visit ph.augusoft.net or call (276) 656-0260.

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.

Adams among those to earn degrees from UNG in spring 2022

For the spring 2022 semester, the University of North Georgia (UNG) awarded about 1,700 degrees and 25 certificates to graduates. About 1,300 graduates participated in the spring 2022 commencement ceremonies held May 6-7 at the Convocation Center on UNG's Dahlonega Campus.

Ocean Adams, of Martinsville, graduated with a Master of Science in Kinesiology.

Positioned in the fastest-growing region of the state, the University of North Georgia comprises five campuses united by a single

mission focused on academic excellence and academic and co-curricular programs that develop students into leaders for a diverse and global society. The University of North Georgia is a University System of Georgia leadership institution and is The Military College of Georgia. With almost 19,000 students, the University of North Georgia is one of the state's largest public universities. The university offers more than 100 programs of study ranging from certificate and associate degrees to doctoral programs.

Documentary

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said the documentary "achieves the Historical Society's mission of collecting, transcribing, and publishing oral histories and stories about our past. It also demonstrates why we feel so strongly about listening to and recording oral history—eleven of the thirteen veterans interviewed are now deceased." "When we started this project, there was just a need and there was no mechanism to fulfill that need," said Keiper. "At the time, the Historical Society was putting up a Martinsville-Henry County World War II exhibit to honor the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor."

With that project on the mind of the board, he said, "we realized we've got all these veterans and they're ageing. A lot of them are in their 90s. So, we took it on ourselves to try to meet with as many as we could."

Keiper said then-mayor Danny Turner connected the team to some interviewees. They also received help from other local veterans and the local VFW.

"We would meet with these people in their homes, sometimes at the VA hospital," and, with the help of Virginia Museum of Natural History staffer Zach Ryder recording and doing sound, Keiper and Fowlkes spoke with the veterans about their experiences.

"Some of it was kind of hard to listen to," Keiper recalled. "They went through some terrible things to serve their

country."

He credited then-Historical Society President Glenn Wood with finding funding to secure the talents of Natalie Hodge and her company, Rudy's Girl Media, which turned the raw footage into a film. "If it wasn't for that, we wouldn't have gotten where we are today," Keiper said.

As the son of a WWII veteran and a combat veteran himself, Fowlkes said working on the project meant a great deal to him. He recalled asking his father about the war. "He never wanted to talk about it," Fowlkes said. In his later years, particularly after his son joined the military, Fowlkes said his father opened up a bit about his experiences.

"I don't think many of them over there got through it without some difficult times, and some of them didn't ever talk about it," he said.

Fowlkes said he believes some find it easier to talk candidly with him because shares similar experiences. "They knew that I had been in combat. It's difficult to talk about these things when you're talking to someone who hasn't been in the military" because of a fear they will not understand the experience.

"Some were in some really scary situations," Fowlkes said. "As they were talking to me, they would get choked up. That long ago and they still get emotional."

He recalled that many of the veterans he spoke

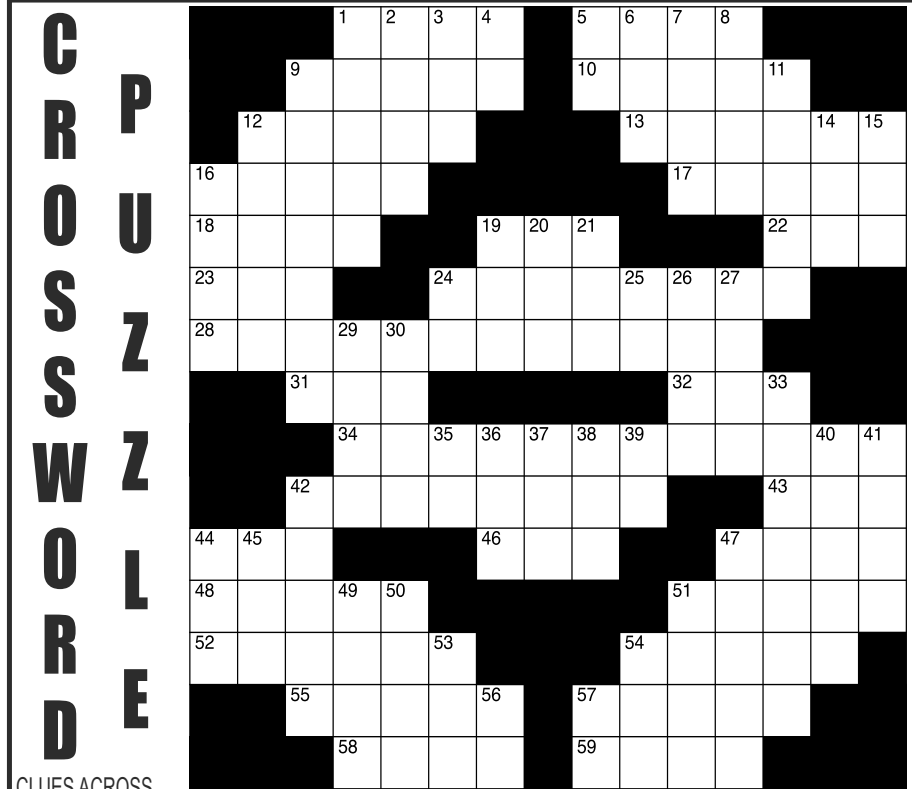
to said, "gosh, I didn't do anything." However, he spoke with one veteran, a woman, who shook the hand of President Truman, and another who was just offshore when Japan was hit with a nuclear bomb. He later flew over the bombed area, becoming one of just a few people in the world who saw the destruction.

"It was certainly a treat to talk to them," Fowlkes said.

The Commemoration Commission, appointed by the Virginia General Assembly, planned, developed, and carried out programs and observances to mark the 100th anniversary of World War I and the 75th anniversary of World War II. Its work is guided by its purposes to honor our veterans, whose sacrifices can never be forgotten, and, in doing so, communicate to today's service members that they will be remembered; inspire a desire to learn more by providing opportunities for Virginians to explore personal connections to WWI and WWII and by highlighting multiple aspects of the state's role in both wars; and connect through travel and tourism by helping visitors to connect to museums, memorials, and sites in Virginia related to WWI and WWII.

Attendees at the premier are asked to wear military uniform or red, white, and blue. A reception will follow the screening.

More information is available at <https://fb.me/e/1VODTw6SY>.



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. 007 Connery
 - 5. Presides over meetings (abbr.)
 - 9. Trefoil
 - 10. Father of Paris
 - 12. Asian nut for chewing
 - 13. Machine gun from the air
 - 16. The communion table
 - 17. His razor
 - 18. Father
 - 19. Doctor of philosophy
 - 22. Cologne
 - 23. Black tropical Am. cuckoo
 - 24. Diversifies
 - 28. Razor author 14th C
 - 31. Maple sugar fluid
 - 32. A corp.'s first stock offer to the public
 - 34. The premier bike race
 - 42. References
 - 43. Extremely high frequency
 - 44. Actress Farrow
 - 46. Not good
 - 47. State of annoyance
 - 48. S. China seaport
 - 51. Bengal quince
 - 52. Provide the means
 - 54. A large and imposing house
 - 55. Excessively fat
 - 57. Spars
 - 58. Former wives
 - 59. Repeat
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Podetiums
 - 2. Frankenberg river
 - 3. Feel ill
 - 4. 12th state
 - 5. "Anything Goes"
 - 6. Daily time units (abbr.)
 - 7. Cagiva ___ motorcycle
 - 8. Drug agent (slang)
 - 9. Study of poetic meter
 - 11. Ceremonial staffs
 - 12. Russian pancake served with caviar
 - 14. Supervises flying
 - 15. Large Australian flightless bird
 - 16. As fast as can be done (abbr.)
 - 19. Before
 - 20. Hall of Fame (abbr.)
 - 21. Constitution Hall org.
 - 24. Atomic #35
 - 25. Ducktail hairstyle
 - 26. Independent ruler
 - 27. Oval water scorpion
 - 29. Modern London Gallery
 - 30. On top
 - 33. Identicalness
 - 35. 2002 Olympic state
 - 36. Tease or ridicule
 - 37. Arrived extinct
 - 38. Opposite of begin
 - 39. Ol' Blue Eye's initials
 - 40. South Am. nation
 - 41. Type of salamander
 - 42. S. China seaport
 - 44. Woman (French)
 - 45. 007's Flemming
 - 47. ___ Domingo
 - 49. A French abbot
 - 50. Gorse genus
 - 51. An uproarious party
 - 53. Point midway between E and SE
 - 54. A waterproof raincoat
 - 56. Spanish be
 - 57. Of I

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

Reversion

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A woman who introduced herself as Glendolia, but has since been identified by multiple sources as Glendolia Price, said she lives on 5th Street in Martinsville; worked for 30 years in the school system and 10 years in the Commissioner of Revenue's office. Initially, she expressed concern about people riding a four-wheeler in the streets, sometimes with a small child on the back, but soon turned to other subjects.

"I'm not pleased with the city council," she said. "Those houses down on Church Street (the new Five Points neighborhood), they're built too close to the street."

She said she was concerned about a child walking out of the front door of one of the homes and into the busy street. "He's going to get killed or get hurt. And I don't want my house facing those cars," she said.

"You say you're trying to do better about

Martinsville? We need to get it together. We need some new vision. It's okay to have old vision, but we need some new vision. You're talking about not keeping people here in the city? It's because we don't have any new vision."

Noting that areas of the county -including Bassett and Ridgeway - hold parades, and that Bassett has a cruise-in, Price said "you're not encouraging people to hold anything here. You need some new vision, you need some young people, some people that are going to get out and make this a better city. We don't need to revert. I'm 73-years-old, I don't want to revert."

Price said the city does not need to revert.

"We've come this far. Why do we want to turn and go back? You're going to have to pay county tax, pay city tax, a lot of things are going to change that we really don't know about."

She said if she wanted

to live in the county, she would have moved to the county.

"I was always told if you had something to say, you say it to their face so, I'm saying I'm not pleased. I refuse to believe this (city) needs to revert to a town. The city has more money than you think they have. I do believe that."

Minister Malvester Muhammad agreed.

"I've heard people campaign. They say they're going to do this or do that, but when they get into office," they do not follow through on campaign promises, he said.

"We want people to come into city council that will break that mindset, because it's not good for this city, it's not good for our community, and it's never been good for us as a people. Never has. Change has to come, and change is hard ... but change is good for everybody once it's done."

"We all have to learn how to understand and

respect and give justice to everybody in the city, but we haven't learned that yet, and because of that, this city is suffering. And it's suffering because you won't give justice to the citizens," he said.

About the Five Points neighborhood, Dixon said "I don't know who's vision it is, but it's not good."

He said he understood that current council members did not bring the city to its current state, "but I look for you all to do better than they did, and if you don't do it then you're just like they are."

Reversion, he said, would not be good for the city.

"Martinsville can make it on its own," he said, "but Martinsville has to clean up some things that they have done." He asked what happened to cause the city's population to decline. "For every cause, there's an effect, he pointed out. "It wasn't an accident."

"The county wants to



Glendolia Price spoke against reversion during the meeting and said the city needed a new vision.

spend money for a jail, but they want to close schools in Martinsville, how does that look? We care about putting people in jail, but we don't care about our children," he said.

He noted there were mostly elderly people attending the meeting that night. "We're the setting suns. The rising suns aren't here because they don't like what you're

doing," he told council. "We need some new ways, some new understandings, because the old stuff doesn't work anymore. The old day is over with."

Other concerns raised by residents over the course of the hour-and-a-half meeting included issues with speeding vehicles, uncut grass, rats, and trash in and around properties.

Increased Pay

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ered in the room. Nearly every hand went up.

"How many of you have been hit by a suspect," he asked, and again, almost every hand was raised.

"How many of you have been in a high-risk chase? Apprehended armed felons," the hands remained raised.

"You need to address the board," chairman Jim Adams admonished.

"My point, sir, is that I know what safety in the community is worth to the deputies," Hatcher said. "I know what it's worth to me. I know the sacrifices they make. I'd just like to know what it's worth to the board."

Sheriff's Capt. Wayne Davis, who lives in the Horsepasture District, said officers appreciated a raise the board approved in January, "but since then, the General Assembly has proposed an across-the-board salary increase for all sheriffs and deputy sheriffs in this commonwealth. The proposed raises are 5-percent by the Senate and 4-percent by the House, with 1-percent bonuses.

"There are over 8,000 deputy sheriffs across this Commonwealth. It wouldn't reflect well, and it would be quite a shame, to see the 197 deputies from the Henry County Sheriff's Office be the only ones who didn't receive this if it's granted by the General Assembly."

Davis listed specific dates on which he sent emails to the board concerning salary issues, the earliest being Sept. 24 of last year and the most recent May 23 of this year. "I have yet to receive any response," he said.

"I'm not just a deputy sheriff, I'm also a constituent of your district, and a citizen of Henry County and you need to pay these people accordingly," he said.

Perry underscored the need for pay increases during the meeting, and recalled the issue dated back to Oct. 2021.

Before the board's Oct. 26 meeting, Perry "brought a letter" which concluded by asking for a raise for officers. "I was told I had nothing further to discuss and I could leave. That's how I was treated."

Perry acknowledged that person came to him a short time later to apologize, saying he did not deserve such treatment.

"I called each one of you, other than Mr. Dillard, a week before that meeting and expressed my concerns. Then we had that meeting. Step raises were mentioned in that meeting, and they were also mentioned by Dr. (David) Martin (then the Iriswood supervisor). A pay study was voted on."

Perry said he was thankful for the \$2 per hour raise as well as the new Adult Detention Center "that you supported and built."

However, with no step system in place, an employee who has been with the department two years (and who is getting ready to leave for a higher-paying position) is only making about \$250 more per year than his initial starting pay, Perry said.

"This is what I'm asking for help on. Something structured. Something that, when a person comes here and joins our office to serve our community, there are some points down the road" they can be financially rewarded as they reach certain milestones. "That's all I'm asking for," Perry said.

Outside of the meeting, Perry said, "two things have hit the sheriff's office." The first, he said, was a cut in the number of locally-funded positions within the office. When budget talks began, the county wanted to cut 18 positions from his office, but ultimately agreed to reduce that number to six positions—five sworn and one non-sworn.

The loss of staff, he said, impacts the services his office is able to offer residents.

The second issue is pay. In Oct. 2021, the board approved a \$2 per hour pay increase for the county's law enforcement officers and public safety personnel beginning in 2022. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were used for the initial increase, but the cost now is maintained in the FY23 budget.

The county's proposed 6-percent pay increase for county employees for the upcoming fiscal year does not extend to his deputies, Perry said, and added a proposed raise for deputies is expected to be included in the state budget when it is passed.

When the state hands down the raise intended for deputies, "they (the county) are going to absorb it into the general fund revenue," Perry said.

In essence, what could have amounted to an 11 percent additional pay increase for the county's law enforcement (with the state and county combined) is "about a wash" for his deputies who "won't get anything coming from the state" and will not get an additional 6-percent from the county, Perry said.

Brandon Martin, the county's Public Information Officer, said "if the perception is that officers would receive 5% from the Commonwealth AND 6% from the county, that is a misperception. That theory was never on the table, never discussed with any sheriff's office representatives during our budget work, and never intended to be the case."

Further exacerbating the issue is the ongoing lack of a pay study, which was approved by the supervisors last year. "It's not being worked on," Perry said.

During the meeting, both Garrett Dillard, of the Iriswood District, and Debra Buchanan of the Horsepasture District, said questions had been brought to them regarding the raises.

Buchanan said she was reminded that previous conversations had broached the idea of step pay for the sheriff's office.

"I don't recall any request to talk about step raises," County Administrator Tim Hall said. "If there had been, I missed it. We certainly meet with sheriff's office personnel. We would never refuse to meet with anyone regarding budget numbers. I don't recall being asked, at least within the last 12- to 24-months. We've never said no to anybody that's asked to meet with us."

If step raises are the desire of a department, Hall said county staff would "certainly be happy to talk to them. I'm not sure that will impact the next fiscal year because we're right up against the deadline, but going forward if there's a desire to have that conversation, absolutely."

Perry vehemently denied Hall's assertion.

"I can say that is completely false," he said after the meeting. "They absolutely refused to listen." Perry said he asked to be put on the agenda, but "no one would talk to me. I asked to talk."

The sheriff said he called each supervisor before the meeting to let them know his officers were upset and would like the supervisors to reconsider their position, but "they had their heads down and bulldozed right on through it."

He said there is currently no mechanism in place, such as a step raise, to monetarily reward deputies and unsworn staff for years of service. "There is nothing."

Instead, Perry said, his office has been using turnover money to provide some increases itself. Turnover funds, he explained, are funds that are freed up after a longtime employee earning a higher salary leaves or retires.

"Let's just say a person retires making \$60,000. A base position is \$43,000, so in essence there's \$17,000 that's created by their retirement," Perry explained. His office uses those funds internally to give raises to those who have reached certain benchmarks of services.

"That's the only reason the deputies have any increase," he said. "There is no step increase."

However, it seems that even Perry's ability to use turnover funds has been stymied.

In the past, Hall said, the sheriff, in conversation with county staff, has been allowed to take turnover funds and move it around within the budget. This past year, Hall said, the county administration asked for

that trend to be put on hold due to budgetary concerns.

Hall reminded the board that this year's budget process began with the county being \$13 million in the hole, and the change in the handling of vacancy pay was done "because we didn't know where \$13 million was going to come from."

"We have always stayed within our budget," Perry later said of the funds. "We've basically had free reign before, we've never done anything extravagant, but a good number of the men and women here would not even be anywhere near where they're at if we were not freely allowed to use the turnover money," Perry said, and asked that his office continue to have the same freedom with regard to the use of those funds.

Hall speculated that the cost of a salary study would be between \$200,000 and \$300,000, a figure which was not included in the budget. "We try not to put things in the budget unless we know we're going to spend them," he explained.

In total, six people spoke in support of the deputies during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Mary Martin, of Ridgeway, said she would be happy to pay increased taxes to properly fund law enforcement, particularly SROs.

She noted that her comments were made hours after a shooting at a Texas school left teachers and students dead.

"This is not the time to be fudging on paying your school resource officers. In my opinion, their job is more important than any of yours and anybody to my left," Martin said, referring to county administration.

"I know there were some budget issues so that the School Resource Officers got left out of the county money and the state money," she said.

Ray Reynolds said his girlfriend's home was broken into 6-weeks ago and no culprit has been apprehended. Additionally, a friend had his lawnmower stolen recently and filed his report over the phone because an officer was not available to take the report on-site.

"I came here because my taxes increased," Reynolds said. "If my taxes increase, I want the most for my money, and I don't think you all have done a good job for the last year," he told the board.

Eric Phillips said he understood the county only had a limited amount of money in the budget and many entities asking for funding. However, "there has to be a preeminent priority on public safety. It doesn't matter about all the other stuff if you don't feel safe leaving your house or you can't get a response."



Henry County Sheriff Lane Perry addressed the Henry County Board of Supervisors during the public comment portion of its May 24 meeting. He along with several deputies and county residents spoke in favor of additional pay increases for county law enforcement.

He suggested additional revenues could be realized without raising taxes by "getting (real estate) assessments right" which he said are currently "woefully, ridiculously low" in the county.

Hall said the comments about school resource officers not getting pay raises came as a surprise. "We are completely unaware of that," he said. "As far as we know, everybody's getting a raise of at least 6-percent."

Vice-Chairman Joe Bryant, of the Collinsville District, said the board had a public hearing on the budget recently.

"Why is it that the sheriff's department waited until the last minute of the next day before a board meeting to come up with this? Why wasn't it brought up during the public hearing like it

should have been?"

According to information provided by Martin, the average salary in the sheriff's office in FY22 was \$44,717 "before the staff were given over 6% raises in March 2022. These individuals were treated as getting their raises in advance."

The average salary for FY23, as currently budgeted, will be \$49,433 according to the document, which also stated the county's current starting salary of \$39,000 will increase to \$43,160 effective July 1.

If supervisors wish to give officers a 5 percent raise, a tax increase would be needed. A penny increase in the real estate tax would generate \$309,190. An increase of 2.15 cents would be needed to fund the 5-percent raise, which totals \$664,420.



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OPINION

An open letter to Wake Forest University

Dear Wake Forest University,
I take this column seriously. When someone is fortunate enough to have a public forum, I feel they should use it responsibly and attempt to illuminate important issues rather than simply wield it like a cudgel against anyone with whom they have a petty grievance.

However, I have put my already written column about term limits on hold for a week. This is a petty grievance column. Welcome to the same club of losers as my terrible internet service provider and the dude who was putting his trash in my trash cans.

What have you done to deserve my ire, Wake Forest? Well, let me tell you.

On May 21, I went with my girlfriend Lauren and her brothers Ethan and Jacob to see Paul McCartney play at your Truist Field. Lauren had surprised me with a ticket months earlier because she is a very sweet person that I somehow tricked into dating me.

I love Paul McCartney. I love The Beatles, of course, because any right-thinking person enjoys The Beatles to at least some degree, but I also love Paul McCartney's solo career. In fact, I prefer his solo work over both John Lennon's AND George Harrison's, and if anyone disagrees with me, I encourage them to listen to "Ram."

But beyond liking Paul McCartney's music, I was just plain excited to SEE Paul McCartney, for the same reason I'd be excited to see a B-17 Flying Fortress at an air show. Paul McCartney is a piece of living history. He's one of the most famous human beings of the past century. It's like going to

see Socrates except you get to hear "Nineteen-Hundred and Eighty-Five."

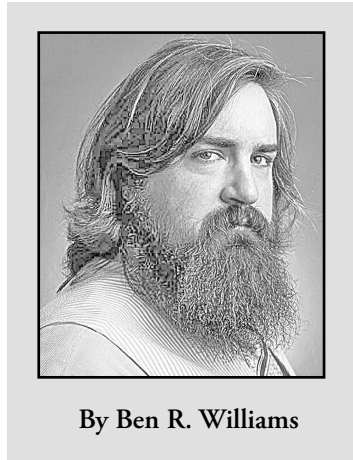
We left the Holiday Inn in Greensboro at 5:15 p.m.; the venue was 30 minutes away and we had read that we should arrive two hours early, and the concert started at 8 p.m. This meant we should arrive about a quarter to six.

When we were three miles out from Truist Field, we hit bumper-to-bumper traffic. And the next two hours and forty-five minutes were spent creeping along, sometimes not moving at all for twenty minutes at a time.

Now look, I get it; Truist Field has a maximum capacity of 31,500 people, which is an awful lot of vehicles to funnel through Winston-Salem. I'm sure it's a logistical nightmare. However, given that the stadium was erected in 1968, I have to assume that it's reached capacity a few times in the intervening 54 years, and that maybe plans would be made for how to most efficiently manage the traffic.

However, if traffic engineering is an art form, then what we witnessed Saturday afternoon was less Michelangelo and more of a wino writing his name in the snow. No one seemed to have any idea what was going on, from the Winston-Salem police to the Wake Forest security, and nobody knew what anyone else was doing.

Under normal circumstances, we would just park the car somewhere and walk a couple of miles. However, these were not normal circumstances; Lauren's brother Jacob had major heart surgery just a month earlier and isn't yet cleared



By Ben R. Williams

to walk very far. Going in, Lauren had communicated with the venue to find out the best way to drop Jacob off as close to the main gate as possible, and your staff had provided detailed instructions on what we should do once reaching Gate 5. Unfortunately, none of your staff knew where Gate 5 was, and even if they had known, it was likely blocked by a thousand idling vehicles.

Far be it from me to throw around scary phrases like FAILING TO PROVIDE HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY, but it almost seems like your university FAILED TO PROVIDE HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY. Man, sends a chill up your spine, doesn't it?

We finally managed to drop Jacob and Ethan off at a gate by begging for help from one of the random flop-sweating security guards directing traffic, and then paid \$20 to park in a mudhole on your sprawling campus, all while listening to the distant sound of Paul McCartney delving into the fifth song of his set.

But you know what, Wake Forest? You know what? If that was all that had happened, I wouldn't be writing this column.

When we finally got to the security checkpoint, one of your security guards said the following to us:

"I'm afraid we just hit capacity. You're all going to have to go back home."

Lauren's jaw dropped. I began laughing maniacally, having been driven to the brink of madness after being stuck in traffic for three hours.

"Hey," the Wake Forest security guard said. "I'm just kiddin'."

I'm a pretty easy-going guy, Wake Forest University. I really am. It takes a whole lot to push me over the edge. But this particular joke is one of the things I hate most in the world. When I go into a store and ask a clerk if they have an item, and they say they don't, and then they immediately say, "Just kidding, we have it!" it infuriates me. This does not even qualify as a joke. It is just being a jerk to a stranger.

But to have this joke made at our expense after an incredibly stressful night while we're actively missing a Paul McCartney concert that we paid good money to see ... that was a bridge too far.

"That's a real nice joke," I told the guy, but I inserted a word between "nice" and "joke" and said it at about 90 decibels. The guy apologized.

Then I went to the next security guard. He asked me if I had anything in my pockets. I said I did. Then he just stared at me blankly. There wasn't a table or anything, so I just took everything out of my pockets and dropped it on the ground.

"You don't have to do all that," the guy said, having just offered no viable alternative.

"I just want to be done with this and see the show," I said, inserting multiple adjectives between each

word.

I only discovered later that of our group of four, I was the only person who didn't get waved with metal detector wands. This may be the greatest failing of your security, Wake Forest, because the one guy that you REALLY need to wave with metal detector wands is the guy filled with murderous cataleptic rage.

We finally got seated, which took awhile because the people you hired to direct folks to their seats didn't know where any of the seats were, and we settled in to watch the show.

I will tell you, Wake Forest University, that the show was incredible (what we saw of it). It was absolutely amazing. Watching Paul McCartney do a duet with an isolated vocal track of John Lennon (courtesy of Peter Jackson) on "I've Got a Feeling" is among the most incredible experiences I've ever had at a concert.

I give your venue absolutely no credit for any of this, of course, any more than I would give credit to a busted-up 13-inch Zenith TV that just happened to be showing The Godfather.

Following this experience, Wake Forest, I am never again setting foot on the premises of your university. In fact, I'm going to begin following college football solely to root against the Demon Deacons. I'm even considering changing banks just because your stadium is Truist Field.

Before my experience at your venue, Wake Forest, I was perfectly content to live and let live. But in this ever-changing world in which we're living, you've made me give up and cry:

Live and let die.

Yours in animosity,
Ben R. Williams

RADFORD UNIVERSITY'S DEAN'S LIST

RU releases Dean's List for Spring 2022

Radford University has released its Dean's List for Spring 2022. Appearing on the Dean's List is the most prestigious academic recognition RU students can receive for their performance during a semester.

Students will be placed on the Dean's List if they meet four specific criteria. They must have 12 semester hours of coursework graded A-F; earn GPA's of at least 3.4 for all courses not graded on a pass-fail basis; obtain

no grade lower than "C"; and no incomplete grades.

The following students were included on the Spring 2022 Dean's List:

Kevin Garibay, Accounting major from Martinsville.

Hunter Greer, Biology major from Axton.

Charlie Koger, Biology major from Bassett.

Jaquan Perkins, Communication major from Ridgeway.

Mackenzie Hairston, Comm Sciences & Disorders major from Martinsville.

Jaxon Turner, Criminal Justice major from Martinsville.

Erica Gilley, English major from Bassett.

Hunter Hiatt, Exercise, Sport, & Health Educ major from Collinsville.

Sergio Pacheco, Exercise, Sport, & Health Educ major from Bassett.

Emily Westmoreland, Exercise, Sport, & Health Educ major from Martinsville.

Tyler Goad, Healthcare Administration major from Martinsville.

Taylor Hill, Healthcare Administration major

from Martinsville.

Kevin Witcher, Health Care Administration major from Martinsville.

Sophia Mansour-Bruderer, Health Sciences major from Martinsville.

Dakota Moore, Health Sciences major from Bassett.

Mackenzie Edmonds, Interdisciplinary Studies major from Martinsville.

Reagan Griffith, Interdisciplinary Studies major from Martinsville.

Twila Ledyard, Interdisciplinary Studies major from Bassett.

Kaitlin Keene, Medical Laboratory Science major from Martinsville.

James Franklin, Marketing major from Collinsville.

Angel Rivera-Ortiz, Media Studies major from Martinsville.

Jessica Bowen, Nursing major from Ridgeway.

Shenika Bowles, Nursing major from Martinsville.

Sarah Kendrick, Nursing major from Collinsville.

Matthew Mills, Nursing major from Martinsville.

Taylor Vaught, Nursing major from Bassett.

Pierson Turner, Pre-Nursing major from Axton.

Jada Turner, Psychology major from Collinsville.

Shyheim Woods, Psychology major from Bassett.

Kelsie Rea, Recreation, Parks, & Tourism major from Martinsville.

Caitlin Branch, Respiratory Therapy major from Collinsville.

Rondarius Smith, Sport Management major from Martinsville.

Bassett resident graduates from Bridgewater College

Cara E. Helbert of Bassett, graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in biology from Bridgewater College during the May 7 Commencement exercises.

Approximately 335 undergraduate and 30 graduate students from the Class of 2022 received degrees. Dr. David W. Bushman, president of Bridgewater College, conferred the degrees.

Bushman also served as this year's Commencement speaker. In his address, titled "All of Us," Bushman touched on the Class of 2022's accomplishments, resiliency and capacity of greatness. Bushman reminded graduates of their connections and the community they have at BC, as well as the sacrifice, care and commitment of everyone who helped them arrive at this day.

Among the approximately 335 undergraduate students in the Class of 2022, 160 earned Bachelor of Arts degrees and 175 earned Bachelor of Science degrees. Twenty-seven members of the class graduated summa cum laude—the top academic honor which requires students to achieve at least a 3.9 grade point average on a 4.0 scale. Thirty-six graduates earned magna cum

laude honors—a 3.7 or better average. Cum laude honors, requiring a 3.4 grade point average, were earned by 56 graduates.

Bridgewater College is a private, four-year liberal arts college located in the Central Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Founded in 1880, it was the state's first private, coeducational college. Today, Bridgewater College is home to approximately 1,500 students.

Commencement held for MHS Class of 2022

An outside graduation recently was held at Martinsville High School's Dan Greene Stadium to celebrate the academic achievements of the 120 students in the Class of 2022.

MHS' graduation ceremony included speeches by students Savannah Brown and Lauren Hruza, a musical selection, "Jireh," by MHS' Gospel Choir, and remarks from MHS Principal Dr. Aji Dixon and Schools Superintendent Dr. Zeb Talley.

The collective tone of the speeches tied into the achievement of not only graduating from high school but also persevering through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, coming out stronger and ready to take on any challenge that may present itself in the future.

"Class of 2022, I'd like to thank you for our wonderfully interesting journey" said Brown, class president. "We made it. You all are some of the most resilient people I've ever met. All of us had to endure the pandemic, and none of us came out of it without significant changes. Now, we walk into a new chapter of our lives, hoping for the best, knowing that our time here will influence what happens there.

"We will leave from here being those real human beings we were so eager to be... and we will all impact this world in some way. Some of the people next to us we will never see again. Others we will know for the rest of our lives. Whatever the case may be, this school unites us, and we will always be Bulldogs. Congratulations, class of 2022."

"The last four years of our lives had been filled with lessons, adventures, and quite a few mistakes," Hruza said. "We adapted. We learned to navigate our way through high school and now we're done... it's a scary transition, especially without each other, but it doesn't have to be intimidating. We're the class that dealt with the aftermath of the pandemic and numerous restrictions, but now look at us... enjoying the company of our peers and families and moving forward with our lives, marching forward with a courage only we could carry.

"People may pity our class and the two before us, but I don't believe they should. We stuck it out through everything. They should be proud of how far we've come, and we should be too. We are going to make it. It's intimidating, but we're the class of 2022. We will adapt and find success. It's in our nature.

I wish all of the graduating seniors a bright future."

"Congratulations to the MHS class of 2022," said principal Dr. Aji Dixon. "Today is your day. The young people you see sitting here on the field are brilliant, bright, beautiful, and above all persistent. I am so proud of the young people we have here today. You have overcome adversities and challenges to arrive at this point and we are proud of you. After we pronounce you graduates, go out and do what you love. When you do that, you'll never work a day in your life. Young people, go out and find peace and joy. MHS class of 2022, we love you."

"I am very proud of you," Talley said in his remarks. "This class has survived two years of a pandemic, yet you continued to smile. You have overcome many challenges, and you're still here. That means a lot. Pandemics will come and go. But today, you can rejoice because you didn't give up. Don't ever let people or pandemics stop you, because you are greater and stronger than a pandemic. You can do anything you set your mind to. You have the brilliance, the resilience, and everything else it takes to be successful."

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ValleyStar Credit Union announces new executive director

ValleyStar Credit Union, in collaboration with the ValleyStar RISE Foundation board, announced Greta Kidd as its executive director to collaborate with communities to identify challenges and opportunities for the advancement of economic resilience.

Before working for the RISE Foundation, Kidd served as the vice president of member experience at ValleyStar Credit Union where she led cross-functional teams to enhance member experience digitally and in person.

“Greta’s 20 years of experience in the financial services industry and her background in nonprofit and community work make her a

valuable asset,” said Mike Warrell, CEO of ValleyStar Credit Union. “She is a true advocate for our community and our members, and I’m confident in her ability to fulfill the purpose and goals of the foundation.”

Before joining ValleyStar, Kidd led a financial education initiative for members and communities at Entrust Financial Credit Union. She also worked for Boaz & Ruth, a nonprofit that supports incarcerated individuals returning home with skills for success.

Kidd holds an MBA from Averett University and a Bachelor of Arts in Business from Mary Baldwin University. She has a

Credit Union Certified Marketing Executive Certification (CUCME) from the Credit Union National Association and received her Fund Development Certification from the University of Richmond.

ValleyStar is a full-service financial institution that offers consumer and commercial products and services. Headquartered in Martinsville, Virginia, ValleyStar operates digital banking services and seven physical branch locations in Collinsville, Danville, Martinsville, Richmond, Roanoke, Rocky Mount and Waynesboro, Va. and a loan center in Fishersville, Va. For more information, visit valleystar.org.



GRETA KIDD

Walkathon set to raise awareness about drugs, violence

Members of the Martinsville-Henry County community will sponsor a walkathon on June 4 to raise awareness about the impact of drugs and violence.

Branded as “a day of healing and fellowship,” the event will include guest speakers who have been a victim, or know someone who has been a victim, of addiction or violence.

Speakers include Kaye Morehead, whose son overdosed just a few months ago, and Kalisha Payne, whose son was recently killed. Dr. Chris Wilson will share his story about

servicing 18 years in jail for a crime which, it has since been proven, he did not commit.

A representative from Piedmont Community Services will also be on hand with literature that explains how individuals experiencing addiction issues may seek help.

The walk begins at noon in the Big Chair Lot in Uptown Martinsville. Participants are asked to gather in the lot at 11 a.m. Cruise-in cars also will be parked there. The walk will end at Baldwin Park below Albert Harris Elementary School, where

guests can enjoy live music, free food and beverages, and listen as the speakers share their stories.

Participating in the walk is not necessary to participate in the events at the park.

The walkathon is sponsored by Reach Out Apostolic Church, Ann’s Kitchen, Heads of State ENT., Pastor Charles Whitfield, Performance 276, Iriswood Supervisor Garrett Dillard, Martinsville Vice-Mayor Jennifer Bowles, the Boys and Girls Club of the Blue Ridge, Pepsi Danville, and God’s Pit Crew.

City educator to participate in Lincoln Fellowship Program

Martinsville High School Social Studies Department chairman and teacher, Dr. Heather Tolbut, has been selected to participate in the Lincoln Fellowship Program in July.

The Lincoln Fellowship Program places special emphasis on the statesmanship of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln, no less than the American Founders, believed that free government is possible only if it recognizes and protects the equal natural rights of all human beings. Attendees, or Fellows, discuss how the statesmanship and political thought of the Founders and Lincoln should guide policymakers today.

Fellows will spend a week meeting with distinguished visiting scholars to study American politics and political thought. In intensive daily seminars and relaxed evening symposia, Fellows discuss a wide selection of great American readings. Topics of study and discussion include the Founding, the Civil War, the Progressive Era, the Great Society, and the enduring modern disputes between liberalism and conservatism. After their participation, Fellows will be invited to attend events and seminars in and around the nation’s capital, at which they will be honored.

Fellows will also participate in The Reframing Lincoln: Myth, Memory, and Changing Narratives Symposium. The symposium will allow Fellows to participate in a week-long professional development event on-site at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. The symposium will focus on how to study Lincoln as a myth, a man, and a pre-City sident. It will explore Lincoln’s beliefs and actions on issues ranging from emancipation to Black citizenship and equality, to civil liberties in America. Attention will be given not only to Lincoln as a politician, but Lincoln as a person, unraveling simplified narratives to unveil a figure in his full complexity.

“I have always been a great admirer of Abraham Lincoln,” said Tolbut.

“Having just completed my dissertation with an emphasis on diversity, justice, and equality, it seems fitting to have an opportunity to expand my knowledge in those areas. I am looking forward to studying at the Presidential Library and meeting other scholars from around the country. I am hopeful that the knowledge I gain will help to positively impact our students and staff.”

“Dr. Tolbut is our high school department chair for social studies,” said Cary Wright, MCPS coordinator for Humanities and Advanced Programs. “This opportunity for her will benefit our entire department and then the entire high school student population. MCPS values and supports our teachers who seek to further their professional skillset.”

In addition, Tolbut also will be presenting at two Holocaust education conferences this summer in Washington D.C. and Richmond, Virginia.

“One presentation will be on how racist ideologies before the 1940s contributed to the implementation of racial laws in Germany and the Holocaust,” said Tolbut. “The other presentation will be centered around how genocides have continued to plague the world, even after the Holocaust, with specific attention given to the Rwandan genocide. These presentations will be given to fellow educators participating in these conferences who are looking to increase their knowledge of Holocaust education.”

“I am very proud of Dr. Tolbut’s leadership and scholarship,” said Schools Superintendent Dr. Zeb Talley. “She is a life-long learner and will certainly contribute to the body of knowledge. Dr. Tolbut is an outstanding professional educator.”

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Funding from page 1

parisons to a “loan,” and “like a cup of sugar,” because if the pandemic-related dollars cannot be used, the city agreed to return the money to the schools.

Clemons explained use of the funds must be directly related to helping mitigate the effects of COVID-19.

He added that he was leery of making budgetary changes without first seeking state guidance and obtaining written approval, given the complications associated with spending ESSER funds.

Ultimately, the city’s plan would depend on the state approving supplanting the local dollars with the ESSER funding.

“We literally have to get permission prior to doing something whereas municipalities have been granted a lump sum of money and you can use it to backfill and do things at your discretion. We have to get approval,” Talley said.

“Hypothetically, if we need \$350,000, would you anticipate that there are some areas in approved reasoning from ESSER funds that would supplant city funds,” Mayor Kathy Lawson asked.

“I’m certainly willing to work with the state and see what comes back. I would anticipate that we could make ends meet if the year flows like it has in recent history,” Clemons said.

“But can we supplant?” Talley asked.

Council member Chad Martin said the allowable expense guidelines for ESSER “says not to supplant.”

“Supplant is the wrong word, but \$350,000 that would be used in ESSER funds rather than city fund balance funds, that’s what I’m looking for,” Lawson said.

“We can certainly agree to attempt that,” Clemons said.

Because the division is required to get state approval for ESSER expenses, Talley asked if the request is denied, “what would we do then?”

“Then, you would come back and say that you gave to us in good faith ... and then we would appropriate it through fund balance,” Lawson said, adding that taking additional money out of fund balance—which is already being used along with the city’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to balance the next budget—is what the city was trying to avoid while seeking ways to provide residents with some tax relief.

Council member Tammy Pearson recalled that Commissioner of Revenue Ruth Easley previously said the city

may already have the funds to cover a 20 percent tax assessment ratio in the proposed budget, thus eliminating the need to adjust school funding.

“If we do have that and we don’t realize it, we’ll realize it when we go through audit,” Lawson said.

“That’s correct,” City Manager Leon Towarnicki said.

“No,” Easley said from her seat in the audience. “Because part of it is future and part of it is current.”

“But dealing with this budget and looking at the amount that, I think we all would agree, that we would like to reduce the personal property tax percentage, we would need that \$350,000,” Lawson said.

“You have it,” Easley said.

“Well, it’s not in our budget,” Lawson said. “We’re dealing with the budget that he’s (Towarnicki’s) presented.”

“It is in your budget,” Easley countered.

“So, the money you’re asking us for is already in there, but you’re asking us to cut that amount,” Talley asked.

Lawson said that although Easley said the funds are in the budget, they are not included in the budget presented to council.

“We don’t want to hurt you,” Martin said, “but we don’t want our citizens to suffer because the tax value has gone up ... she’s (Lawson’s) trying to find a certain amount of money to be able to help our citizens.”

Vice Mayor Jennifer Bowles told Talley she could see he was passionate about the funds, but she believes there were instances in the past in which Talley has come to council with a request “and we’ve worked with you on anything that you’ve ever needed.”

“I think we’ve shown good faith,” Lawson said.

“We don’t want to do anything to hurt the schools, and if you all have a need, we’re most certainly going to help,” added council member Danny Turner.

“So now we’re going to deduct almost \$350,000?” Talley asked. “We’re cutting the cafeteria fund (around \$175,000, Clemons later estimated), plus the \$350,000?”

“We don’t want to say ‘cut,’ Dr. Talley,” Lawson said.

“Well, what do we call it? Is it a loan,” Talley asked.

“Are you going to borrow it like a cup of sugar,” Clemons asked.

“It’s a placeholder for ESSER funds,” Lawson said. She, along with Martin, reiterated that if school administra-

tion found ESSER funds could not cover the \$350,000, the city would reimburse the funds from the general fund.

“You have not not done what you said” in the past Talley said.

“We would not be honorable people if we didn’t honor our word,” said Lawson.

In addition to the school funding reduction, the approved budget allocates \$6,571 to the Blue Ridge Regional Library, which was half of its requested funding increase, with the understanding that the city will fully fund the request should Henry and Patrick counties also contribute their full shares of the increase.

Council also approved an ordinance adopting an assessment ratio of 80 percent for tangible personal property for the upcoming budget year with an anticipated total reduction of \$342,659 to the personal property tax bills of residents.

The approved budget includes the following tax rates:

*Real Estate: \$1.03975 per \$100 assessed value

*Personal Property: \$2.30 per \$100 assessed value

*Machinery/Tools: \$1.85 per \$100 assessed value

Refuse collection fees were increased by 7-percent across all categories.

Personal property

The reduction in school funding was done to mitigate increased personal property tax bills following a second year of increased valuations for vehicles due to supply chain issues and increased demand for used cars.

The average increase for passenger cars, trucks and motorcycles as assessed by J.D. Power was 26.14 percent over the 2021 assessments. For example, a 2013 Honda Accord which, in 2021 was valued by J.D. Power at \$9,500, this year is assessed at \$11,950.

On the higher end of the scale, a 2019 Dodge Caravan which in 2021 was assessed at \$13,675 this year is valued at \$22,125—a 62 percent increase over 2021’s value.

The personal property tax assessment ratio approved by council will reduce the overall value assessment of passenger cars, trucks, and motorcycles in the city’s fleet by 20 percent, from \$74,490,990 to \$59,592,792, thus reducing the tax revenues realized by the city in the upcoming fiscal year by \$342,658.55, by Easley’s calculations. Had council applied no ratio, the city looked to recognize \$1.7 million in personal property tax revenue for



City Commissioner of Revenue Ruth Easley said she believes enough revenue is already in the budget to apply a 20 percent reduction in assessed personal property without reducing funding for the schools.

the upcoming fiscal year.

In materials provided to city council, Easley wrote that, as of May 17, the city has collected \$182,010.40 over the \$900,000 budgeted personal property tax revenues in the current fiscal year.

According to Easley’s estimates, the city is expected to receive an additional \$201,713.97 the amount currently budgeted for the upcoming fiscal year’s revenues.

During the meeting, Easley said “the revenue is there” to provide the 20 percent reduction, it just “hasn’t been properly allocated because we don’t have discussions in this building.”

Towarnicki said work on the budget begins in January. “This budget was presented a month ago. A lot of information in this document was put together in late March, early April.” As the fiscal year progresses, it becomes easier to budget accurately because the budget team has real numbers rather than projections.

“The numbers that we have in the budget versus what Ms. Easley’s talking about, I certainly understand how a difference like that can occur,” Towarnicki said. After the meeting, Towarnicki said the city’s proposed budget includes a \$200,000 increase in anticipated personal property revenues “and we still feel confident in that number.”

During that meeting, Easley noted that not all city residents would feel the impacts of either the valuation increase, or the tax relief measure. Some, including those on fixed incomes, may see 100 percent tax relief, and some may see a decrease in their vehicle valuations over last year.

“You’re still going to have winners and losers,” she said. “You’re just going to have people that aren’t having to give you an arm and a leg and three toes.”

Ultimately, council approved the 20 percent assessment ratio in a 4-1 vote, with Martin voting against because he preferred a 10 percent ratio, which would provide some relief to residents while still increasing the city’s revenues.

“We’re talking about reversion for a reason,” Martin said. “As city council, we can’t live day-to-day, we have to think years ahead.”

Bowles, too, expressed concern.

“I’m concerned that we need to keep this money for next year,” she said. “I’m really concerned with what’s going to happen with our budget long-term versus just this one assessment and this particular bill ... our revenue is stagnant. Everyone sitting on this council knows our revenue is stagnant. We’re spending \$3 million of our ARPA money to plug a hole in the budget so although, yes, I want relief, I’m concerned that we’re being shortsighted about this rather than looking long-term about how this is going to affect us.”

“We have to live for today,” Turner said.

Bowles said she did not understand how Turner, who at every city council meeting over the last several months, has advocated for putting the majority of the city’s ARPA funds aside to help mitigate reversion costs, could advocate for a tax assessment ratio which would reduce the city’s revenues.

“When we increase our taxes, our citizens are less able to pay than the average Virginian,” Turner replied.

Reversion costs

Pearson asked about a number of other items in the budget, including infrastructure needs and the costs of reversion.

“Budgets are based on looking at the past and then moving forward,” she said. “I would like us to put in the number (cost) for our reversion attorneys. That way we can monitor whether we’re exceeding it, we’re meeting that number, we’re under budget.”

Towarnicki said staff could put a placeholder number in the budget.

City Attorney Eric Monday said from a budgetary standpoint, “and given the way that this has turned out with Henry County reneging on their agreement and, as far as I’m concerned, deliberately delaying all proceedings possible since then, I think putting just a placeholder that you may or may not abide to is simply giving another tool to Henry County, a tactical advantage saying you’re spending far more than you budgeted. It might also send them an indication of your political will to pursue this process to a conclusion. So, from a tactical standpoint, I would advise you to continue using the same payment method and budget method that you have heretofore. There’s no point in telling your adversary what your war budget is.”

Towarnicki said the city has no projected budget for reversion, only a record of what has been spent.

“The budget is balanced with ARPA and with fund balance, so anything that goes over is going to come from fund balance.”

On May 20, the city issued a press release stating that the cost of reversion has more than doubled for Martinsville since the county rejected the negotiated Voluntary Settlement Agreement (VSA) in December 2021.

As a result of that action, the release stated, “the process has turned into a contested reversion costing the City of Martinsville \$654,543.91 in legal fees” and has equated to the city essentially paying for two reversion processes (a negotiated and a contested) with a total cost (thus far) of \$1,139,696.99.

The city did not approve the requested funding increase for the local 911 center, with Lawson saying that Henry County did not fund its portion of the

increase, which Powell requested to give his staff a cost-of-living pay increase.

The city also declined to provide a stipend to the public defender’s office. “I think it sets a horrible precedent” for a locality to provide supplemental income for a state agency. Bowles and Martin both voted in favor of the stipend.

Pearson also inquired about certain legal services line items, which Monday said were there to fund external legal advice. “There are times when telecom or the electrical department or other departments need specialized legal services that I am simply not able to provide,” he said.

Monday said he believed there also is a legal line item for the Commissioner or Revenue’s office because “she does not wish to use my services.”

In an email, Easley wrote that the line item referenced by Monday was \$3,000, which she requested with the FY19 budget “because I had businesses that were operating without a business license, which is a criminal offense under the city’s licensing ordinances.”

She said that when Joan Ziglar was Commonwealth’s Attorney, her office would handle the few cases Easley had each year. When Monday became city collector, he and Ziglar had a verbal agreement that he would handle those cases if Ziglar wished.

“She had no problem with that, as long as I didn’t have a problem. I did not, at that time. However, by 2013, Mr. Monday only wanted to handle the “larger” non-compliant businesses, which created a uniformity issue for my office. Consequently, we went several years with a compliance problem,” Easley wrote.

Easley said she eventually created a \$3,000 annual contract with Taxing Authority Consulting Services (TACS) for 12 hours of legal work each year, which was approved by council in 2019 “because Mr. Monday told the mayor in a budget meeting that he was the city council’s attorney and not my attorney.”

She wrote that she now has an agreement with the current Commonwealth’s Attorney Andy Hall to handle the few compliance issues that come up each year, but continues to budget legal services for any legal issues that arise outside of Hall’s purview. Any unexpended funds, she said, return to the city at the end of the fiscal year.

In other matters at its meeting Tuesday, council:

*Heard an overview of the May 23 West End neighborhood tour and meeting.

*Set a public hearing for June 14 to receive names of those interested in appointments for one 3-year term ending June 30, 2025, and one unexpired 3-year term ending June 30, 2024.

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Sat & Sun., May 28 & 29 - 8 a.m. until, 166 Ken Lane, Ridgeway, VA. Tools, fishing equipment, furniture, household items.

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

Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, or veteran's status. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

PIEDMONT COMMUNITY SERVICES

serving Martinsville, Henry, Franklin and Patrick county has the following job opening: Full time position with benefits available for a Residential Manager (Position Number CS-543-15) for group home in Patrick Springs, VA serving adults with intellectual disabilities. Duties include developing & implementing individual service plans, supervising residential staff, providing training for adults with intellectual disabilities in independent living skills, personal

hygiene, leisure/recreational skills & community inclusion. Experience working with group home, program management, & staff supervision. Evening & some weekend hours required. Bachelor's degree in human services with at least one year experience working with adults with intellectual disabilities. Must meet QDDP qualifications. Salary commensurate with education & experience as it relates to the position, residence in close proximity to Patrick Springs VA preferred. A Piedmont Community Services application is REQUIRED & may be obtained online at <http://www.piedmontcsb.org/ApplyOnline.html>. PCS provides excellent benefits & is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

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
Joseph S. Ashcraft
JUDGE IN CLERK

**COUNTY OF HENRY
REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**
Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings has been scheduled for **June 15, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following these public hearings, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on each application to the Board of Supervisors. The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct public hearings on the following applications on **June 28, 2022 at 6:00 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 input into the possible rezoning of property. Following are the specifics of the public hearings.
Case R-22-09 Logan R. Bowman
The property is located at 210 The Great Road, in the Horsepasture District. The Tax Map numbers are 39.6(23)/15,16 and 39.6(24)/4. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 1.8-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Agricultural District A-1. This zoning will allow the flexibility the applicant needs (in both setbacks and size) to keep a recently constructed accessory building.
Case R-22-10 Douglas Blake and Brooke Spencer
The property is located at 575 Mary Hunter Drive, in the Blackberry District. The Tax Map number is 14.9/284F. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 103-acres from Industrial District A-1 to Agricultural District A-1. The applicants wish to construct a home on the property and potentially keep farm animals. 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

**NOTICE OF HEARING/FILING
OF PETITION SEEKING DETERMINATION OF DEATH
IN RE: KEITH ALLAN FETTER**
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Petitioners, Jennifer Lynn Fetter and Joseph Fetter, by counsel, have filed Petition in the Henry County Circuit Court to declare Keith Allan Fetter of Henry County, Virginia, deceased.
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Petitioners, by counsel, will appear before the Honorable James McGarry, Judge of the Circuit Court for Henry County, 3160 Kings Mountain Rd. B, Martinsville, VA 24112, on July 19, 2022, commencing at 9:00 a.m., and there present evidence and argument in support of their Petition, which pleading having been previously filed.
Panagiotis C. Kostopanagiotis, Esq.
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Panagiotis C. Kostopanagiotis, Esquire
Daniel, Medley & Kirby, P.C.
110 North Union Street
Danville, VA 24541
Telephone (434) 792-3911
Facsimile: (434) 793-5724
Counsel for Petitioners

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PCS from page 1



Peer Recovery Center staff gather on the front steps of their new building, which formerly was home to American National University. The second floor of the building is still unused, providing plenty of room to grown over the next half century.



State Sen. Bill Stanley, R-Moneta, told the gathered PCS staff that "whenever somebody comes to you without hope, you restore it" and commended them for their work in the community.

don't supply the financial resources needed for this very important task that you undertake. And yet you make so much out of what we're able to give you. We put so much upon your shoulders: Fix the world." Stanley recalled that, when he was younger, he complained to his father that he could not change the world himself. He said he was told that, if what he chose to do could change the life of one person, he would have changed their world and, in turn, the world itself. "What you do on a daily basis changes peoples' lives, changes their world, and in effect changes the world," Stanley said, and commended the agency's staff for their efforts. Preston credited the agency's staff who "work tirelessly to meet the needs of individuals and family" in Martinsville and the counties of Henry, Patrick, and Franklin. "If we don't offer the services, then we'll build them," Preston said. "If we can't provide the services, if we can't build the service, then we'll link individuals and families" to those who can provide what they need. "Today is a prime example of building a great service," Preston said. "Action is the foundational key to all successes. One of the main focuses of Piedmont is, really, it's all about help-

ing. It's in our mission, it's in our heart, and it's just what we do. We try to help. We also want to serve ... promoting compassionate solutions is at the core of what we do." "Every time someone comes to you without hope, you restore it. Today, we celebrate and recognize your talent, your good work, and also what you're going to do for this community in our future," Stanley said, adding that ribbon cuttings are symbolic, like unwrapping a gift. The gift in this case, he said, is the center, because everyone who walks through the door "comes in with desperation, with need, and they walk out of this door with hope, and you provide that hope to them. May all of you, when you walk through this door, be renewed with the spirit that brought you here in the first place. May every challenge that you face be met with the same zeal and energy and enthusiasm that I see in every one of you. May everything you do today make a difference for tomorrow. "Today, we celebrate not only a new chapter for Piedmont Community Services, but a new chapter of life for so many out there, those that are known to you already and those you are yet to meet, because you are going to change the world with everything

that you do right here," Stanley said. The center was created "to provide a no-barrier point of access to recovery supports," said Sharon Buckman, director of Clinical Services. Planning of the center began in 2019, when a group of peer recovery support specialists came together to discuss the creation of a peer recovery support program at PCS, Buckman said, and added that the vision was a simple one. "We wanted a place that was staffed by individuals with lived experience in recovery from substance use, mental illness, or both. We believe that meeting people who have walked through some of the same trials as you and who have learned to live in recovery is the best way to start to build hope. We wanted a space where anyone who walked through the door would be welcomed and treated with respect and we wanted a place where people could develop a vision for their own recovery, a roadmap for how to get there, support in their journey, and as many second chances as they needed as long as they walked through the door each time wanting something better for themselves." She said all of PCS' peer recovery specialists had a hand in planning the programming at Pathways. "Who better to know what a recovery center should look like?" she said. Even the center's program manager, Leon Richardson, was a Community Recovery Program (CRP) graduate, she said. Richardson said the center was created to provide "alternatives for the purpose of positive socialization, recreation, and support while promoting advocacy, self-help, and education. "The peer center will also provide a safe and motivating environment that will assist in enhancing individual recovery. All are welcome in the recovery center," which is a drop-in space with a calendar of upcoming activities and offered services hanging in the entryway for curious visitors, he said. When the program was initially established, it was open three evenings per week at its Uptown location. Now, "we will be expanding programs to be offered during the day and also offering Saturday hours beginning in June," Buckman said, and added that "the (other) programs located here have been able to do great things for people who have mental health and substance use issues." One such program is Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) which, Buckman said, exists to help those exhibiting significant mental health symptoms who have dif-

ficulty maintaining contact with more traditional treatment providers who operate out of offices. She said the program includes the term "assertive" because "ACT staff don't wait for you to find them, ACT staff come to you," providing services in the community in which a person lives and focusing on the whole person rather than a single aspect of that person. "Because ACT staff meet people where they are and help them access the resources that are important to them, they instill hope in these people to dream bigger," she said. Another service which has moved into the new building is the CRP program, which was established in 2012 in partnership with the Harvest Foundation. Buckman said the program was the vision of Jim Tobin and Bill Cook, who understood that, though everyone has the ability to recover from substance use problems, the lack of employment opportunities in the community was putting people at risk of relapse when they became discouraged in their job search. She said CRP developed as a support for those who completed the early phases of recovery, helping the skills needed to avoid substance use, but who needed support to continue their journey to a full, sustained recovery, which included the ability to support themselves and their families. "This is really the result of a lot of shared dreams. Many people came together, and we were willing to hear each other and understand that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts," Buckman said.

OBITUARIES

Ralph Edwin Shank, Jr.

Ralph Edwin Shank, Jr., 73, of Martinsville, Va. passed away on Wednesday, May 18, 2022. He was born October 26, 1948, in Roanoke Va. to Ralph Edwin Shank, Sr. and Jean Fishburn Shank. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his son, Walker Edwin Shank.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Sandra Matherly Shank; son, Taylor Carroll Shank; Brother, Randall Shank (Dawn); Sisters, Susan Shank Clement (Chuck) and Ann Shank Hankins (Stephen); many nieces and nephews; grandnieces and grandnephews.

Mr. Shank worked for the IRS and later worked at Tultex for 20 years. He later retired from the VF Corporation with 17 years of service as the Director of Global Risk Management. It was a job he loved and one that required him to travel extensively to other countries.



Ralph loved going to the beach, and he enjoyed hunting and fishing.

He was a lifetime member of First Presbyterian Church of Martinsville where he served as a deacon, elder and treasurer of the session.

A memorial service was held on Sunday, May 22, 2022, at First Presbyterian Church of Martinsville. It was officiated by Minister Dr. Dwight Christinbury.

Memorials may be made to the Rooster-Walk Foundation Inc., P.O. Box 601, Martinsville, Va. 24112; American Heart Association, 3140 Chaparral Drive, Suite #106, Roanoke VA 24018, or the Dan River Basin Association, 413 Church Street, Suite 401, Eden, NC 27288.

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

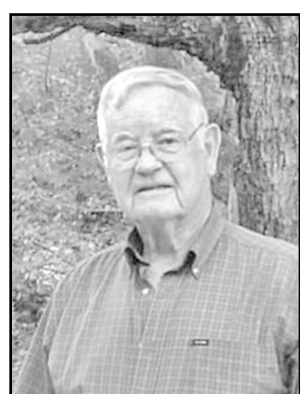
To express condolences online, please visit www.collinsmckeestonemartinsville.com.

Houston William Smith, Sr.

Houston William Smith, Sr., 97, of Martinsville, Va., died Thursday, May 19, 2022, at Hospice of the Piedmont, High Point, NC.

He was born December 15, 1924, in Rockbridge County, Va. and grew up in Staunton, Va. He was a son of Homer William and Annie Berry Smith. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife of 56 years, Janet Loretta Conner Smith, one sister, Ferbie Virginia Smith Coffey, two brothers, Guy Leslie Smith and Franklin Elwood Smith.

Houston was working in the Norfolk Navy Shipyard as an apprentice shipfitter when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred. He subsequently left the shipyard and joined to serve in the 8th Air Force during World War II on a B-24 bomber as a waist gunner. He was a 1952 graduate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Mechanical Engineering and retired from DuPont as a mechanical engineer with 34 years of service. He was a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and a member of Forest Hills Presbyterian Church for many years.



Surviving is one daughter, Pamela Smith Caldwell (Paul) of Westminster, Co., one son, Houston (Hugh) W. Smith, Jr. (Charlene) of Kernersville, NC, eight grandchildren, six great-grandchildren as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

The family requests that memorial contributions can be made to the Wendy and Norris E. Mitchell '58 Hall (Fund #878256) at Virginia Tech by visiting <https://give.vt.edu> and noting "in memory of Houston W. Smith" in the Memorial Gifts section. Mr. Smith was a proud alum and gifts will support the new Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering building being built on the Blacksburg campus.

A funeral was held on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at McKee-Stone Funeral Home Chapel, officiated by his niece, Christie Hardbarger. Interment was at Roselawn Burial Park.

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

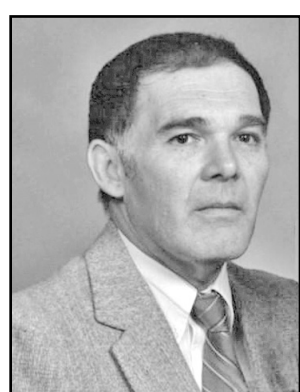
To express condolences online, please visit www.collinsmckeestonemartinsville.com.

Randolph Brian Peters

Randolph Brian Peters passed away on Friday, May 20, 2022, at his home. Randy was born in Milford, Massachusetts, the son of Belford Euriah and Dolores Sylvia Peters. His father volunteered into service during World War II, so his mother moved the family to Roanoke to live near relatives. Randy grew up there, attending Andrew Lewis High School in Salem. He graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Industrial Engineering. Through his college years he served in the Naval Reserves.

Immediately after graduation, Randy began work in a supervisory position at Radford Arsenal. From there, he worked as a supervisor at Olin Corporation in Saltville, Virginia Mirror in Martinsville, and at DuPont until retirement.

Randy was an avid outdoorsman with a love for hunting and fishing in his younger years. He had an extensive knowledge for plant identification and delighted in knowing the names of those found on his property. As his children grew, he became involved in their activities, helping with little league baseball and basketball, high



school band and PTA activities. In his personal life, he enjoyed Porsches and online gaming. He became a leader for Boy Scout troop # 168, a high adventure troop. Through their activities, he hiked and canoed several hundred miles as well as making trips to Philmont. For years, he was a member of the local Eagle Scout Review Board.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his sister, Virginia Lee Peters, and son, Conrad Lewis Peters. His surviving family are his wife Mabel Caldwell Peters, daughter Diane (Matthew) Busch, grandchildren Celeste and Anton Busch and a number of cousins.

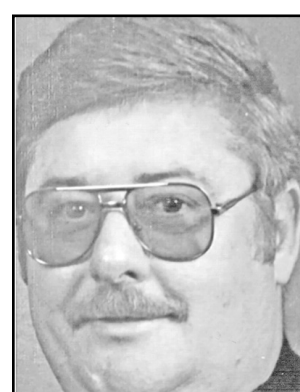
A visitation was held at Wright Funeral Home on Friday, May 27, 2022, followed by a celebration of his life. The family suggests that memorials be given to the Boy Scout Troop 168 travel fund. Checks may be made to Doug Foley, Troop Treasurer, 591 Ken Lane, Ridgeway, VA. 24148.

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

David Beard

David Beard, 74, of Ridgeway, Virginia passed away Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. He was born December 30, 1947, in Virginia to the late Harry P. Beard and Mabel B. Beard.

David was of the Baptist faith and attended Wayside Baptist Church. He was a 1967 graduate of Drewry Mason High School. David was a dedicated employee of Dupont for many years. He was an All-Star Hurler (Pitcher); known as "Lefty" or "Hurls No Hitter". Between the years of 1962 - 1967, he played baseball for the Dupont Pony League, Martinsville- Henry County All-Star League, Martinsville Pirates, Drewry Mason Spartans, Martinsville Connie Mack League Club, Daytona Beach Islanders, and was signed to the Detroit Tigers in 1967. David held a sportsman-



ship award, the Lowell Young Most Improved Award and was presented with the Most Valuable Player trophy. In his free time, he enjoyed deer hunting, fishing, bowling, NASCAR, and spending time at Lynwood Golf & Country Club. His daughters and granddaughters were closest to his heart.

In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his sister, Cynthia Robinson; and brother, Charles T. Beard.

He is survived by his daughters, Rhonda L. Casey, and Daphne J. Campsey; granddaughters, Ashley N. Hodge, and Hanna E. Sprinkle; three great grandchildren; and two nephews.

Services will be held at a later date. Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at www.wrightfuneralservices.net.

Elizabeth Ann Rea Whitlock

Elizabeth Ann Rea Whitlock, 80, of Martinsville, VA passed away Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at her home. She was born April 29, 1942, in Henry County, VA to the late Nellie Brown Miles and James Earl Rea. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her sister, Edna Earl Rea Campbell; brothers, David Brown Rea, Francis Elwood Rea, and James William Rea; and great-grandson, Jacob Robert "JJ" Dowdy, Jr.

Mrs. Whitlock was a member of Pleasant Grove Christian Church.

She is survived by her husband, Billy Gene Whitlock; daughters, Kimberly Ann Whitlock, and Billie Jo Burrell (Jeff); son, Timothy Clay Whitlock; sister, Doris Rea Minter; grandchildren, Jacob Robert



Dowdy (Peyton), Andrew James Dowdy, Jared Michael Burrell, and Ann Claire Burrell; and great-grandson, Patrick Drane.

The funeral service was held Monday, May 23, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville Chapel with Rev. Jim Pence officiating. Burial was at Pleasant Grove Christian Church Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to Pleasant Grove Christian Church Cemetery Fund, c/o Sharon Moore, 130 Mack Rd., Martinsville, VA 24112, or Pleasant Grove Christian Church Relay for Life Fund, 2488 Preston Rd., Martinsville, VA 24112 (make check payable to the American Cancer Society).

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

Michael Keith Baity

Michael Keith Baity, 63, of Martinsville, VA passed away Sunday, May 22, 2022, at his home. He was born April 30, 1959, in Yadkin County, NC to Minnie Beatrice Lynch Baity and the late Locksley Hall Baity.

He supported the Fraternity of Police, local EMS and Fire Department, the American Cancer Society, and Red Cross.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his wife, Kristin Joan



Baity; daughter, Jennifer VanOoyen; step-daughters, Rene Gravel and Jen Sterns; sister, Vickie Gunn; and their families.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday, May 29, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville Chapel.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Cancer Society.

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

Joy Leigh Ferguson Bradshaw

Joy Leigh Ferguson Bradshaw, 61, of Dry Fork, Virginia passed away Thursday, May 19, 2022, at her home. She was born August 15, 1960, in Martinsville, Virginia to the late John Ferguson and Julia Davis Ferguson. She taught dancing for years.

She is survived by her husband, Roy Conner;



sisters, Shirley Osborne and Susan Parrott (Bruce); and brother, Jerry Ferguson.

All services will be private.

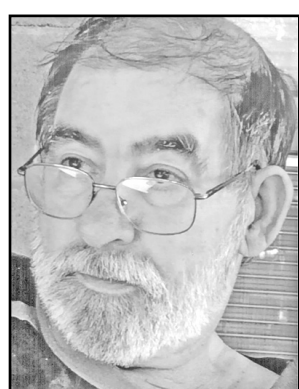
Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at www.wrightfuneralservices.net.

Larry Thomas Agee

Larry Thomas "Peanut" Agee, 76, of Axton, Virginia passed away Saturday, May 21, 2022, at his home. He was born October 29, 1945, in Martinsville, Virginia to the late Roy Kelly Agee and Mary Isabelle Lankford Agee. He had worked for Pulaski Furniture and Stanley Bowles.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his son, Larry Agee; sisters, Beatrice Painter and May Hopkins; brothers Leonard Agee and Leo Agee.

He is survived by sons, Todd Agee



and Bruce Agee; sisters Doris Wilson, Margaret Riggs and Patsy Hodges; brother, Ted Agee; grandchildren, Meagan Agee, Kayla Hairston and Taylor Agee; and five great grandchildren.

A memorial service was held on Wednesday, May 25, 2022, at Wright Funeral Service Chapel, with Pastor Jason Alverson officiating. Burial was private.

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

Herman Wayne Atkins, Sr.

Herman Wayne Atkins, Sr., 73, of Martinsville, VA passed away Sunday, May 22, 2022, at his home. He was born November 5, 1948, in Franklin County, VA to the late Herman Smith Atkins and Mary Chitwood Atkins.

Mr. Atkins started out as an electrician for Bassett Fiberboard Plant in 1971 and later retired as Plant Manager. He served in the U.S. Air Force and was a member of Blue Ridge Cycle Club.

He is survived by his wife, Claudia S. Atkins; children, Bonnie A. Lee (Daryl



K. Lee), Herman Wayne Atkins, Jr., and Jonathan A. Atkins (Christy Atkins); grandchildren, Michelle N. Lee, Lara R. Lee, Jessica M. Lee, and Andrew and Christopher Atkins. He is also survived by his sister Joyce A. Roden (Buddy); and his brother, William T. "Butch" Mason (Sue).

A visitation was held on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services,

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

Edward Malcolm Poole

Edward Malcolm Poole, 94, of Bassett, VA passed away on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at his home. He was born on February 12, 1928, in Person County, NC to the late Mollie Wiley Poole and Willie Poole.

Mr. Poole served in the United States Navy. He was a member of Semora Baptist Church where he was Chairman of the Board of Deacons and was a trustee. He worked at Bassett Furniture for thirty-four and a half years.

He is survived by his wife, Nannie Gilley Poole; sons, Gary Poole, and Marty Poole (Angela); sister, Alice



Cundiff; grandchildren, Edward Joseph Poole, Edward Matthew Poole, Amanda Ann Bryan, and Nicholas Taylor Poole; and eight great-grandchildren.

A visitation will be held from 1 to 2 p.m. on Friday, May 27, 2022, at Norris Funeral Services. Funeral will be held at 2 p.m. at Norris Funeral Services, with Pastor David Deisher officiating. Burial will be private.

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

P&HCC to receive share of federal funds

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) is among 15 in Virginia to share in \$6,236,161 in federal funding announced Wednesday by U.S. Sens. Tim Kaine and Mark Warner.

The funds are earmarked for Upward Bound programs. Upward Bound, administered through the Department of Education, provides support to low-income and first-generation

high school students in order to increase high school and college graduation rates.

P&HCC will receive \$312,480 for programs including tutoring, mentoring, and a summer bridge program. It will serve 68 students in Martinsville as well as Henry and Patrick counties.

"All students deserve access to the resources they need to succeed," said Kaine,

D-Richmond and Warner, D-Alexandria. "This funding for Upward Bound programs will support low-income and first-generation students through high school and help them prepare for higher education. This represents another critical investment in leveling the playing field so that more students have the tools to reach their goals and get ready for life after high school."

Other facilities to receive funds include:

Norfolk State University, \$297,485; Virginia Tech, a total of \$1,146,350; The University of Virginia's College at Wise, \$427,133; Virginia State University, \$451,377; James Madison University, \$287,537.

Also included are Portsmouth Public Schools, \$297,601; Paul D. Camp Community

College, \$290,714; Southwest Virginia Community College, a total of \$685,387; Hampton University, \$297,599; Virginia Union University, \$444,616; Rappahannock Community College, \$287,537; Wytheville Community College, \$297,601; Old Dominion University, \$400,571; and Virginia Highlands Community College, \$312,173.

Pandemic EBT program to issue benefits under revised criteria

Virginia's Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program will issue benefits for the 2021-2022 school year to students for specific COVID-related absences under revised eligibility requirements, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Fewer households are expected to receive the benefit due to most students attending school in person and having access to school meals at no cost.

The revised eligibility guidelines require both a school and student to meet specific requirements.

A student must: attend a P-EBT-eligible school and qualify for free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program or attend a school that participates in the Community Eligibility Provision program.

AND the student must also have participated in full-time, remote learning provided by the school divisions or been absent due to a documented, COVID-related issue such as quarantine, illness or community transmission.

Eligible schools must also have been closed or operating at reduced attendance for

five consecutive days due to a COVID-19-related issue.

Benefits will be issued retroactively beginning May 25 to eligible students who missed school due to COVID-19 during the months of September through October 2021. The release of benefits for additional COVID-eligible absences will continue through June 24 in accordance with the approved issuance schedule.

The amount of benefits will vary, and are based on the number of days in which the eligible student was absent from school and met program requirements each month.

Students enrolled in full-time, virtual schools such as Virtual Virginia do not meet USDA P-EBT eligibility requirements for the current school year.

Households with students are encouraged to visit PebtVA.com to learn more about the changes in eligibility requirements. The receipt of P-EBT benefits for previous school years does not guarantee eligibility for the 2021-2022 school year. Schools and students must meet all eligibility requirements, which will be determined by the information that each school/school district provides to VDSS.

Questions regarding P-EBT benefits should be directed to the P-EBT Call Center at (866) 513-1414 or (804) 294-1633 Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., and Saturday from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Households that do not meet eligibility requirements for the P-EBT program are encouraged to visit Commonhelp.virginia.gov to check eligibility for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, text 'FOOD' to 304-304 to find a local Summer Meal Site, or contact 2-1-1 Virginia to learn more about food resources in their local area.

DeVaughan picks up nomination

Taysha DeVaughan, D-Big Stone Gap, has earned the historic 9th Congressional District Democratic nomination for the U.S. House of Representatives.

DeVaughan advanced after the Democratic convention was canceled.

She will challenge incumbent U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Salem, in November.

DeVaughan is the first woman to earn the nomination of a major party in the 9th, along with being the first enrolled member of an Indigenous nation to seek the office in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

As an enrolled member of the Comanche Nation, it is important to DeVaughan that little girls who look like her, both in her nation and in the 9th see that they can

run for office.

"The 9th Congressional District deserves a seat at the table where their needs and concerns are addressed. Too often big corporations and executives' needs are put before the community and the hardworking people of the 9th. The miners, the teachers, the healthcare providers, and the aging population of the 9th, families along with young people who are fleeing need to know that someone is going to fight for them and their futures every day," DeVaughan said.

DeVaughan, of Wise County, makes her home with her son, Aiden. She was born in Lawton, OK, and is an enrolled member of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma. She moved to Virginia in 2011 shortly after her father

became the Director of Flatwoods Job Civilian Conservation Center in Coeburn, VA.

Soon after graduating from UVA-Wise in 2018 with a BA in Communications, DeVaughan began her career at the Appalachian Community Fund as a Regional Organizer and was quickly promoted to her current position as the Donor Engagement Coordinator. She has been an active member of the community. She is the former President of Southern Appalachian Mountain Stewards, a founding member of Lonesome Pine Mutual Aid and a gubernatorial appointee to the Virginia Council on Environmental Justice where she serves as chairman. She also is a member of the Environmental Justice for All federal working group.



TAYSHA DEVAUGHAN

April's jobless rate unchanged from March

Virginia's unemployment rate held steady at 3 percent in April, while total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 13,600 jobs, according to Gov. Glenn Youngkin. The Commonwealth's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3 percent is 1.3 percentage points below the rate from a year ago. The labor force increased by 18,281 to 4,329,907, as the number of unemployed residents decreased by 1,324 to 129,771. The number of employed residents rose by 19,605 to 4,200,136.

According to BLS household survey data, Virginia's labor force expanded to over 4.3 million workers in April 2022. Since February of this year, the labor force grew by over 52,000. The average monthly growth in the size of the labor force from February through April of 2022 was 17,352, while the

2021 average was -1,653. Labor force growth March's labor force growth was the second-largest monthly increase while April's was the third-largest going back to 1976.

The Commonwealth's labor force participation rate rose by 0.2 of a percentage point to 63.5 percent in April. The labor force participation rate measures the proportion of the civilian population age 16 and older that is employed or actively looking for work.

"We have more than 60,000 Virginians working today than when I took office," said Youngkin. "Our state continues to add jobs month after month as we expand opportunities for businesses and families in every corner of the Commonwealth. There's more work to be done, Virginia is still thousands of jobs short of pre-pandemic levels.

Our mission remains clear, continue making Virginia the best place to live, work and raise a family."

"The number of employed residents has risen a total of nearly 62,000 and by an average of 20,500 during February, March, and April in 2022, compared to averaging under 5,000 a month in 2021," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick. "Also, the labor force participation rate rose to 63.5 percent — nearly a full percentage point higher than at the end of 2021. This is an indication that many Virginians are getting off the sidelines and back into the game."

"The unemployment rate has not risen in two years and is a third lower than a year ago," said Secretary of Labor Bryan Slater. "While the unemployment rate can sometimes go down even

when jobs are lost, VEC data for April showed total employment went up while unemployment went down. These trends indicate that Virginia's recovery from the most recent recession is moving forward."

Virginia payroll employment increased by 13,600 to 4,037,800 in April. From April 2021 to April 2022, the VEC estimates that establishments in Virginia gained 124,500 jobs, an increase of 3.2 percent. In April, the private sector recorded an over-the-year gain of 115,700 jobs, while employment in the public sector gained 8,800 jobs.

Compared to a year ago, on a seasonally adjusted basis, nine of eleven major industry divisions experienced employment increases while two saw employment decreases. The largest over-the-year job gain occurred in leisure and hospitality, up

62,400 jobs (+18.4%). The second-largest over-the-year job gain occurred in professional and business services, up to 18,600 jobs (+2.4%). The next largest over-the-year job gain occurred in education and health services, up to 18,000 jobs (+3.4%). Other job gains occurred in trade and transportation (+11,200 jobs), government (+8,800 jobs), miscellaneous (+6,400 jobs), information (+2,300 jobs), construction (+300 jobs), and mining (+200 jobs). Within government, local (+2,500 jobs) and state government (+700 jobs) both gained jobs over the year while the federal government saw a decrease in employment (-700 jobs). The largest job loss during April occurred in finance (-2,700 jobs) to 207,500. The second-largest decrease occurred in manufacturing with a decrease of 1,000 jobs to 235,900.

SCC cautions Virginia investors about online investment scams

The Internet, social media and messaging apps offer many useful features for daily life, but also new opportunities for investment scams. While social media platforms, online dating websites and dating apps may be good ways to meet people, Virginia residents should be wary if someone uses an online friendship or romance to solicit an investment or offer investment opportunities.

Individuals trying to promote investment scams may pose as potential romantic partners or possible new friends in an attempt to lure unsuspecting individuals into fraudulent investment schemes. These scammers may set online traps as well

as use technology and social media platforms to profile targets. They may spend time getting to know their target and use flattery to try to win them over before introducing an investment opportunity.

The State Corporation Commission's (SCC) Division of Securities and Retail Franchising (Division) encourages Virginians to be skeptical of investments offered by a new and unfamiliar online contact or friend request, and to do their homework before considering any investment.

"Don't let your heart rule your head when making financial decisions," said Director Ron Thomas. "The virtual world can make it

easy for scammers to pretend to be someone who they are not. Whether online, by phone or in person, be leery of unsolicited investment offers and never share financial information with a stranger. Understand the risks and benefits of any investment and do not invest more than you can afford to lose."

Thomas offers the following tips:

Independently verify who is offering an investment and the details of an offer, as well as verify any app or website to which a stranger may direct you. Be wary of individuals who are unwilling to meet face-to-face or via clear video feed, or who attempt to pressure you into making an

investment.

Keep in mind that individuals offering investments are obligated to disclose all material facts regarding an investment, and they must disclose the risks associated with each product. Bad actors will often minimize or conceal risks of investment and, instead, tout their alleged profits and payouts.

Make sure any investment and the person offering it are properly registered. In Virginia, contact the Division at 804-371-9051 or toll-free at 1-800-552-7945, or email SRF_General@scc.virginia.gov. Investors can also search the federal Securities and Exchange Commission's Investment

Adviser Public Disclosure website or visit the BrokerCheck platform offered by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA).

If an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Don't be swayed by flattery or the promise of friendship or romance, or be enticed by claims of safe, lucrative or guaranteed returns with little or no risk. These representations are often a red flag for fraud, since all investments carry some degree of risk.

For more information, visit the Division's website at scc.virginia.gov/pages/Consumer-Investments or the NASAA website at nasaa.org.

Youngkin released education report that found sliding performance, lowered standards

Gov. Glenn Youngkin last week received the Department of Education's report "Our Commitment to Virginians: High Expectations and Excellence for All Students." The education report builds upon Youngkin's direction in Executive Order One issued on his first day in office. The Governor affirmed his guiding principles to address troubling data trends and outlined policy recommendations to restore excellence in education in Virginia.

"Virginia's public schools have long enjoyed a reputation for academic excellence," said Youngkin. "But the data in this report demonstrates that Virginia's student achievement gaps are disturbing and cannot be ignored. This report documents a clear and sobering lesson on the consequences for students when state leaders lower academic standards and dismantle accountability."

The 33-page report from the Department of Education details how state policy choices and priorities over the last decade have resulted in lower student achievement in reading and mathematics, wider achievement gaps, reduced transparency, and eroding parent confidence in the Commonwealth's public schools.

"Virginians deserve to know the truth about how our children are doing," said Secretary of Education Aimee

Guidera. "Under Governor Youngkin's leadership, we aim to be the most transparent and accountable state in the nation, while empowering parents and teachers with the knowledge and choices to do what's best for each learner."

Key findings in the report include:

*Virginia now has the lowest proficiency standards in reading and mathematics in the nation, resulting in the wide "honesty gaps" between the performance of students on state Standards of Learning tests and performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

*Despite statistically significant declines in the reading performance of Virginia students on the 2019 NAEP and on state assessments, the Board of Education voted in 2020 to lower the proficiency standard on all elementary, middle school, and high school SOL reading tests.

*The Board of Education's Standards of Accreditation — once an accountability model for other states — now de-emphasize grade-level proficiency in reading and mathematics and mask wide achievement gaps.

*Pre-pandemic results from college entrance examinations taken by 2019 Virginia high graduates show wide disparities in college readiness, especially in mathematics.

*Last fall, 42% of Virginia

second-graders scored below the benchmark on the Commonwealth's early literacy screening assessment.

*Homeschooling increased by 56% in 2020-2021 as the parents of 59,638 school-age children chose not to send their children to public schools. Despite the return to in-person instruction this year, the parents of 55,769 students chose homeschooling over enrolling their children in a public school. In addition, 5,828 students have transferred from Virginia public schools to in-state private schools since the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

"I want to stress that this report is not an indictment of our teachers, principals, and other school leaders. They have worked tirelessly over the last few years under extraordinary conditions and circumstances," said Superintendent Jillian Balow. "But local decision-making inevitably reflects priorities and policy choices determined at the state level. I am committed to working with Governor Youngkin, the state Board of Education, and the General Assembly to reorder Virginia's K-12 priorities, raise expectations for all of our students, and create an accreditation system that is transparent, honest, and that prioritizes grade-level proficiency."

The report also identifies Youngkin's guiding principles in education that will guide the



PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN MARTINE
Gov. Glenn Youngkin delivers remarks after education report findings in the Patrick Henry Building on Thursday, May 19, 2022.

work of his Administration in restoring excellence in education:

*Establish and maintain high expectations for students, schools, and ourselves.

*Advance parent and teacher empowerment to best serve students in partnership.

*Demand zero-tolerance for discrimination in education and beyond.

*Foster innovation in all education environments.

*Provide transparency and accountability so that each child is seen and receives what they need to succeed.

*Ensure post-secondary read-

iness so that all learners can succeed in life.

*Protect and nurture freedom of speech and inquiry to ensure every student is taught how to think, not what to think.

"The future prosperity of our Commonwealth depends on how well we prepare our students," said Youngkin. "Working alongside parents, teachers, and policy-makers, we will restore excellence in education and ensure that all students have access to quality education opportunities that prepare them for success in our workplaces, our communities, and our democracy."

Keep food safety in mind when grilling this summer

It's no secret that most people enjoy a good cookout during the summer months. While there are no rules about which foods should be served at a barbecue, there is a correct way to prepare grilled foods to ensure they're safe.

With Memorial Day weekend serving as the unofficial start to grilling season, now's a great time to brush up on food handling and cooking safety tips.

Melissa Chase, Virginia Tech Department of Food

Science and Technology's consumer food safety program manager, noted there are three basic principles to follow to ensure grilled food is prepared and served safely.

The first is to keep everything clean, Chase

said. Cooks always should start with clean hands and continue washing them before and after handling any raw meat, poultry or seafood to prevent the spread of bacteria.

Fruits and vegetables also should be washed before they're cooked, while meat, poultry and seafood should not. Rinsing or washing meat can increase the risk of cross-contamination between foods, as splashing water can accidentally spread bacteria onto ready-to-eat foods, surfaces or cooking utensils.

Secondly, raw meat should always be stored separately from ready-to-eat foods such as chips, salads and other snacks, as well as pre-washed produce. Raw meat also should be refrigerated below 40° until it's ready to be cooked.

Cooks should use sep-

arate utensils to place foods on the grill and to remove them, and foods should be transferred onto clean, unused plates once they're fully cooked. Meat and vegetable marinades should never be reused, nor should utensils or dishes that have touched raw foods.

Finally, grill operators should use a thermometer to ensure that food is cooked to safe internal temperatures.

Beef, fish, lamb and pork should be cooked to at least 145°; ground meats, including hamburgers and hot dogs, should be cooked to a minimum of 160°; and poultry should be cooked to 165° or higher to eliminate bacteria and reduce the risk of food-borne illness.

Chase emphasized the importance of having a food thermometer on

hand to accurately read temperatures on thicker foods such as chops, roasts or steaks.

"Make sure you're using that food thermometer to check the internal temperatures, because even though juices might be running clear, that's not necessarily an indication that something is done," Chase said. She also added that grills tend to cook the outside of foods much faster than the inside, underscoring the need for a thermometer.

Grillers also should familiarize themselves with safe grilling practices before barbecuing.

Additional food safety information, such as how to store leftovers, can be found through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

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