

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, March 11, 2023

(USPS-6)

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Pictured are before and after photos of the ribbon cutting to kick off Fast Track 2023.

Fast Track opens with VIP Night

by Tara Lucas

The Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce kicked off the 27th year of its Fast Track trade show with VIP night on Tuesday. The first night was a ticketed event open to chamber members. Held at the Commonwealth Center, which is commonly referred to as the Clocktower, the event included 100 exhibitors from various sectors,

including healthcare, manufacturing, and local restaurants. Chris Lawless of Lawless Welding was happy to be back exhibiting at Fast Track this year. He attributes previous Fast Track events to helping his business to get a lot of exposure. "If you want a community presence, it's good," he said of participating

See Fast Track, page 3



Annah Wheeler (left) and Patty Williams in their Bee City Exhibit.

City looking to fill open positions

The City of Martinsville has several open positions, including the top positions of the city attorney, assistant city manager, and community development director. Travis Hodge, director of Human Resources, said the lack of a city attorney is impacting normal operations. "If we need an attorney, we outsource it," said Hodge. The city regularly requires the use of an attorney because of various legal matters involved in operations. Although several positions remain vacant, Hodge added that things are getting done. City Manager Leon Towarnicki is helping to bridge the gap until some of the openings can be filled. "I'm kind of having to step into some of those roles and take care of things," said Towarnicki, who previously served as Public Works director for several years. That experience, combined with his experience in other areas, help him meet the needs of the current staffing issues where necessary. The assistant city manager role is of major importance to Towarnicki. "Right now, if I'm out sick or something happens to me, we're kind of dead in the water," Towarnicki said. Hodge said the city is using a state-of-the-art applicant tracking system to find candidates. "It sends our jobs to multiple search engines," Hodge said, adding the city also uses Patrick & Henry Community College, press releases, and social media to



help with its recruiting efforts. "We have a number of applications for the Assistant City Manager position, so we will probably start interviewing within the next week or so," Towarnicki said, adding the city has received applications for several of the other positions, with interviews scheduled for the city attorney position as well. Visit www.martinsville-va.gov to view a list of open positions and/or apply.

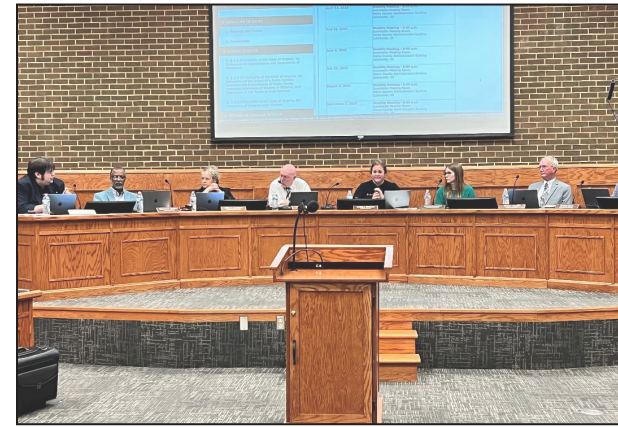
NCI Board alleges its foundation failed to provide support, highlights other issues in recent filing

The vice-chairman of the New College Institute's (NCI's) Board of Directors issued a statement about the decision of the now defunct New College Foundation's (NCF) decision to form a new charitable foundation now known as the Martinsville Henry County Academic Foundation (MHCAF). In the statement prepared on behalf of the NCI Board of Directors, Richard Hall noted the history of the NCI. "Founded in 2006 by state charter by the Virginia General Assembly, The New College Institute (NCI) is a higher education state-agency of the Commonwealth and center of learning that provides access to academic degrees, workforce credentials and professional learning experiences in high quality learning environments to prepare students for regional and statewide career opportunities and participation in collaborative, positive community change, while promoting regional economic prosperity and community transformation." The NCF, he added was "incorporated as a 501(c)(3) public charity in 2006 solely to provide 'financial and other support to the New College Institute,' the New College Foundation (NCF) has received significant financial support from donors who intended their

charitable giving to fully support NCI, has received yearly grant monies earmarked for New College, and has received tax-payer monies utilized by the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purchase of the main campus building that the now non-functioning and defunct NCF previously owned by grants. "For the past five years, despite continued efforts by NCI to engage with its own foundation, the New College Foundation has completely abandoned and abrogated its sole responsibility to provide support for NCI," the release stated. "It is undisputed that the New College Foundation has never raised any money on its own for the benefit of New College during that 5-year period. It has instead sustained itself on other funds that were previously raised for NCI without the help of the current foundation's leadership and has obtained Virginia taxpayer monies that were paid to it by the Commonwealth of Virginia for the state's acquisition of the Baldwin Building" which houses NCI, the release stated. The fact that the foundation's executive director "works remotely from the comforts of his home

See NCI Board, page 6

County school division seeks budget increase



The Henry County School Board approved the 2023-24 budget proposal at a recent meeting.

by Tara Lucas

The Henry County School Board approved a proposed \$101,748,527 spending plan for 2024 at its March 2 meeting. David Scott, Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Administrative Services, presented the proposal that includes a requested increase in local funds for pay raises and other expenses.

"Our budget objectives for the fiscal year 2024 budget development are few but I believe they are very much on target," Scott said. Budget increases are being sought primarily to give raises to teachers, classified employees, bus drivers and aides, administrative employees, and paraprofessionals who work with students who

See County, page 3

Bell encourages students to "stand tall" against bullying



George Bell is pictured with Albert Harris Elementary School students. Bell visited the school Tuesday to discuss bullying and prevention.

by Tara Lucas

The tallest man in America, George Bell, visited Albert Harris Elementary School on Tuesday morning to discuss bullying and give students some pointers about how to deal with the impact. "Bullying has become a big issue in our schools. A lot of the children have no idea how to handle it," said Bell. Students learned that there are different types of bullying such as verbal bullying, physical bullying, and cyberbullying. Verbal and physical bullying occur in person while cyberbullying takes place online, primarily through social media platforms. Bell mentioned that bullying typically starts at a young age, and he encouraged students

to reach out to parents, teachers, and other trusted adults. Bell was inspired to speak out against bullying after an incident that took place in Hampton, Virginia near his hometown of Portsmouth,

See Bell, page 6

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Monday, March 13

The Martinsville City School Board will hold its regular meeting at 6:15 p.m. in the Martinsville City Chambers, 55 W. Church St., Martinsville.

Monday, March 20

P&HCC Local Board meeting will be held at 12:30 p.m. in the Hooker Exhibit Hall, Frith Economic Development Center.

Events

Saturday, March 11

Basic Computer Skills Class begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Main Library in Martinsville. The free class is for those aged 18 and up. Call (276) 403-5430 to register.

Sunday, March 12

"Power in Pearls: An Afternoon Tea at One Starling" in recognition of Women's History Month, 3-5 p.m. at One Starling, 1 Starling Avenue, Martinsville. Tickets are \$25 per person and must be purchased in advance by calling (276) 403-5361 or visiting the Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center & Museum, 1 East Main Street, Martinsville, Virginia, Tuesday-Friday, 1-4 p.m. Attendance is limited to 50. All proceeds will benefit the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society.

Thursday, March 16

Riddick Dance, 6:30 p.m. at Piedmont Arts. A contemporary African American dance company featuring a broad repertory, expressive movement and a fusion of dance styles. Riddick will perform three pieces: Limerick of Our Souls, a dance-theater assortment including love stories, poems, and speeches; ONE, a mixed media piece dealing with love, loss, forgiveness, and conflict resolution through the enlightening, meditative music of Alice Coltrane; and The King Project, improvisational dance theater laced in visual projections based on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speeches, "I Have a Dream" and "I've Been to the Mountain Top," and his "Letter from Birmingham Jail." A reception will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the performance starting at 7 p.m. Tickets are available for purchase from www.piedmontarts.org.

Sunday March 19

Create your own barn quilt at Spencer-Penn, from noon to 4 pm. All supplies are provided. Cost varies, depending on size. Class will be filled on a first paid first served basis. Once payment is received, design choice should be sent to the instructor, Lauren, at misslaurenbyron@gmail.com. Questions may be e-mailed to Lauren at the above e-mail address or to Susan at spc.susan@yahoo.com.

Saturday, March 25

The Harvest Youth Board's Books & Bunnies, which features an Easter Egg Hunt, crafts, interactive activities, food trucks and books, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Smith River Sports Complex Amphitheater, 1000 Irisburg Road, Axton.

Tuesday, March 28

Book Bingo at the Martinsville Main Library will be held from 10 a.m. to noon. The event is free. Registration begins on March 21.

The Southern Gentlemen Bluegrass Band will perform at 10 a.m. in the Historical Center's Susan L. Adkins Memorial Meeting Room. The event is free.

ONGOING

Create a Memory Garden Planter at select branches of the Blue Ridge Regional Library in March. All events begin at 2:30 on: March 14 at the Ridgeway Branch; March 15 at the Collinsville Branch; March 16 at the Patrick County Branch; March 17 at the Bassett Branch and March 18 at the Main Branch in Martinsville. Participants are required to bring a pair of closed toe tribute shoes to create the planter. To register, or for more information, call the participating branch library of your choice.

Begin your journey of health and wellness by joining the Blue Ridge Regional Library's new Walking Club. The club meets at 11:30 a.m. on Wednesdays in March at the Main Library in Martinsville.

Henry County Parks & Recreation invites you out for a trek along the trail. 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 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 (MHCCHW) offers "no-touch" Medicaid/FAMIS application assistance for Virginia residents from birth to 64 years of age. No sign-up fees, no premiums, no deductibles. Income Guidelines have increased effective 1/18/2023. If you applied in the past and were denied, please call again. MHCCHW's specially trained Medicaid/FAMIS Outreach Advocate can answer questions, and help you apply by phone Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Medicaid renewals will resume soon. Medicaid members need to update their mailing address and contact information. Having accurate information will make sure they receive what is needed to renew their coverage.

In-person assistance is available on Wednesdays 10 am to 1:30 at Community Storehouse 128 E. Church St. (lower level of the old Leggett Building) Martinsville. Call or text Ann Walker at (276) 732-0509.

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. Call (276) 647-9585.

Local preschoolers spend a day in the galleries and gardens of Piedmont Arts

Preschool in the Galleries at Piedmont Arts took place on Tuesday morning. Preschool in the Galleries is a series of programs for pre-K students designed to foster a love of the performing and visual arts at a young age. Performances are free of charge and all area preschool classes and homeschool students are invited to attend. Carlisle School's theatre troupe, ZipZapZop, performed an entertaining and engaging Dr. Seuss-inspired musical for over 150 audience members. After the performance, another preschool group took part in a planting day for Piedmont Arts' new pollinator path and played in the Discovery Room.

Leading students into the room through a colorful tunnel of linked arms and jazz hands, Carlisle School's ZipZapZop troupe started the first of two performances in the Frith Performance Hall with high energy and a welcoming spirit. Young students were mesmerized by a collection of fun games, music, and spectacle; all serving a theme of acceptance, kindness, and love.

After the first performance, preschool students from First Presbyterian Weekday School went outside and assisted C.D. Prillaman of Prillaman Landscape Dimensions plant the first garden bed of the Piedmont Arts' Pollinator Path. Equipped with trowels, mulch, and fertilizer, the children dug holes with Prillaman and planted black-eyed Susans, dogwoods, and other small shrubs. Prillaman tasked them with returning in a couple of weeks to see if the plants have started growing. This garden bed will be the first of many surrounding the new pollinator trail, partially funded by the Harvest Foundation's Project Hope, a granting opportunity to inspire hope in the community.



Carlisle School's theatre troupe ZipZapZop welcomes preschoolers into the Frith Performance Hall by making a colorful tunnel.



Two children, assisted by C.D. Prillaman, preparing a spot for planting.



Preschoolers at First Presbyterian Weekday School learn about native plants and planting with C.D. Prillaman of Prillaman Landscaping Dimensions.



Piedmont Arts' Education Coordinator Sarah Short introduces the children to ZipZapZop, Carlisle School's theatre troupe.

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County from page 1

have learning disabilities. “We are proposing an increase in the budget for fuel costs, and we are also looking at providing front-end budgeting for bus replacement,” Scott said, noting there was a slight increase in utility costs impacting the budget.” Scott said.

“We do show a \$300,000 increase in utilities,” Scott said. However due to a reduction in other areas the total impact averages about \$200,000.

The total increase to the 2024 budget is \$1,530,730 from the previous year. Scott said that 62 percent of the expenditures will go towards instruction with the majority of it

going towards raises for employees. The facilities budget has decreased to 1 percent from its typical 4-5 percent of the total budget.

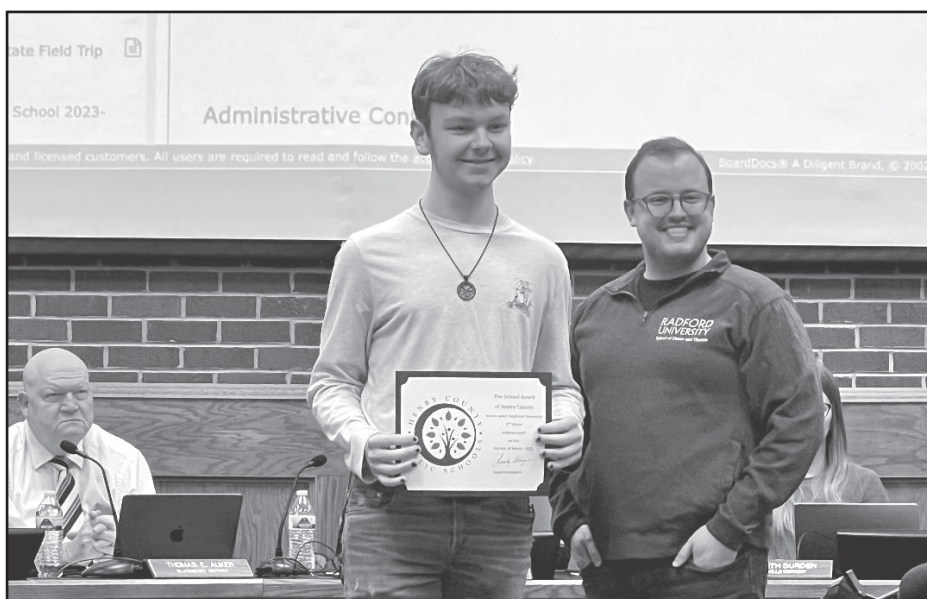
The proposed budget for 2024 includes a capital improvement plan for various projects including HVAC (heating and air) systems, lighting replacement, elevator installation, roof replacement, field houses, handicap accessibility to athletic campuses, track repair, and turf upgrades.

“State funding for this year comes in at \$70,620,860,” Scott said. The amount is \$328,048 more than fiscal year 2023. The budget also shows an increase in local matches and leeway funds

of \$702,682 more than the previous year.

The budget proposal now will be reviewed by the Henry County Board of Supervisors.

The board presided as several students were recognized for various achievements in a multitude of categories, including students who placed in the Eastern Oratorical Competition, Laurel Park Middle School Ladies’ Volleyball, students who received District Scholastic Bowl Honors, All District Swim, All District Wrestling, 1st and 2nd Team Regional Honors, and All Regional Forensics.



Carson Foley was recognized for his achievements in forensics. Here, he is pictured with Coach Justin Kline.

Fast Track from page 1

in Fast Track. “We’ve been blessed, I’m happy to be a cornerstone in the community. We are growing more in the community, I’m just happy to be here. Every year has been great to me,” Lawless said.

Many exhibitors offered samples, goodie bags, and the opportunity to win free products through drawings and games. Kimberly Keller-Bonacci, the chamber’s Uptown Entrepreneurial Development Manager, said the response was great.

“We weren’t really sure what to expect since this is our first year back from COVID, but we think we are right there if not better than we were in previous years. We are happy with the turnout,” she said.

Martinsville has been designated as a Bee City. Representatives were onsite to educate Fast Track attendees about things they can do to encourage pollination and the importance of bees to our ecosystem.

Patty Williams and Annah Wheeler are working with the initiative to educate local residents on what it means to be a Bee City and how they can help.

“There’s been a lot of interest and people are aware that bees are declining,” Williams said.



Chris Lawless of Lawless Welding stands in front of his booth at Fast Track.



Throng of people flocked to the opening night of Fast Track.



Braised short ribs and mashed potatoes from King’s Grant were among the menu items sampled by attendees/participants on the opening night of Fast Track 2023.



Coach Dylan Johnson with Michael Clark, who received recognition for wrestling. Carson Foley and Clark were among several students who received recognition.

NCI Board from page 1

in Tennessee is a clear indicator that this foundation does not work for the citizens of Martinsville and Henry County. And it has now just been made clear that NCF has utterly failed in its singular mission to support this higher learning center,” the release stated.

“With its recent ‘dissolution’ and attempt to re-make itself into a broader educational foundation, the now-defunct New College Foundation appears to be attempting to improperly convert those donations, grants, and tax-payer monies given to NCI through NCF, for its new foundation’s future use, with no accountability or communication to the New College Institute, or to those that made those previous donations,” according to the release.

“Moreover, the actions taken by the new (MHCAF) Foundation in its reorganization to improperly attempt to transfer all NCF’s previously acquired assets to the Harvest Foundation rather than to NCI upon its dissolution are completely unacceptable,” it added.

While NCI will not stand in the way of NCF trying to start over as a new foundation, it must nevertheless first divest itself of the funds it currently holds to the benefit of New College Institute. And while New College applauds this new foundation’s (MHCAF) efforts to help the citizens of Southside, this “new” foundation cannot do so with funds that

were received prior to these changes and meant to support New College Institute, Hall notes in the release.

“Consequently, NCI’s Board of Directors’ Executive Committee voted unanimously at its meeting on February 9th to authorize NCI’s legal counsel, the Office of The Attorney General of Virginia, to take all steps necessary (including but not limited to immediate legal action), in order to protect the assets of the Commonwealth, New College Institute, and the tax-paying citizens of Virginia from the recent actions of the Board of Directors of the New College Foundation,” the release stated. “New College anticipates that a new foundation supporting the Institute will be established once these funds are rightfully returned from the now defunct and ineffective New College Foundation.”

Additionally, and “given that the now defunct foundation has not played any positive role and has abandoned its responsibilities to New College Institute over the last 5 years, all matters related to this new (MHCAF) Foundation are being handled by the solely by the board of NCI in conjunction with its legal counsel at the Office of the Attorney General of Virginia, therefore allowing the new NCI director and staff to work toward fulfilling NCI’s mission without distraction,” the release concluded.

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- European Common Market
 - Poetic go quickly
 - Parts per thousand (abbr.)
 - Pigeon pea
 - Sao __, city in Brazil
 - Longest division of geological time
 - Alto, California city
 - Small terrestrial viper
 - Coming after all others
 - Penetrate with a sharp fork
 - Still-hunt
 - Chinese frying pan
 - Cave-dwelling salamander
 - Any thick messy substance
 - About the moon
 - AKA Tao
 - Jet cabin requirement
 - Prince Hirobumi, 1841-1909
 - An easy return in a high arc
 - Italian commune
 - L. Comfort’s illuminator
 - Foot digit
 - Minute tunicate genus
 - Green regions of desert
 - Direct a weapon
 - __ de Janeiro
 - Equestrian animals
 - Acress Tomei
 - Head of the RCC
 - Twines
 - Scientific workplace
 - Minerals
 - Hypothetical original substances
 - Hit with the open hand
 - Political action committee
 - Winged goddess of the dawn
 - W. states time zone
 - Impounds for lack of payment
 - Electronic data processing
 - Man or boy (Br.)
 - African nation
 - Fault’s incline from vertical
 - Method of birth control
 - City founded by Xenophanes
 - Legumes
 - Beckham’s spice girl
 - Explosive
 - 1936 Nobel winner Otto
 - Greenbay teammate
 - Brass that looks like gold
 - School graduates
 - Lively, merry play
 - Make indistinct
 - Egyptian mythological figure associated with floods
 - Washing sponge
 - Old name for nitrogen
 - Radiotelegraphic signal
 - MN 55731
 - Sun in spanish
 - Helps little firms
 - Cease living
 - Flames up
 - Egyptian sacred bull
 - To wit
 - Mire
 - Bring two objects together
 - Filths
 - Israeli dance
 - Oil cartel
 - A particular instance of selling
 - Microelectromechanical system
 - Var. of 45 across
 - Goat & camel hair fabrics
 - Soda
 - A firm’s operational head
 - Seaport (abbr.)

OPINION

A real drag

I've been to two drag shows in my life, both of which took place at wedding receptions. Those were two of the most fun receptions I've ever attended.

At one of them, I watched a drag queen with the brilliant name of Melanin Monroe do a flying leap off a stage while wearing spiked heels and land in a full split, then pop right up like it was nothing. It was a spectacular feat; if I tried to do that, I would either die immediately or desperately wish I had.

Drag shows are fun. At no point have I seen anything remotely obscene at a drag show. I have never seen anyone suddenly decide to devote themselves to a life of deviancy following a drag show. All I've seen are skilled performers having a good time.

Those may be the last two drag shows I ever attend, however; drag is fast becoming a criminal activity.

Consider Republican Tennessee Governor Bill Lee, who signed a bill that would criminalize drag performances that take place in public and in front of children. A first-time violation is a misdemeanor punishable by a \$2,500 fine and/or up to a year in jail; a subsequent violation is a felony punishable by up to six years in jail.

Or consider Republican Texas Rep. Nate Schatzline, who recently authored a bill that would label any venue that both serves alcohol and

hosts drag shows as "a sexually oriented business" that cannot admit anyone under the age of 18. Eight other state legislatures are pushing similar anti-drag bills.

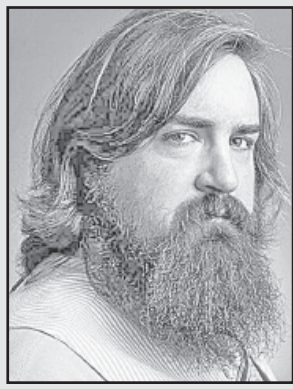
Interestingly, Gov. Lee and Rep. Schatzline have something in common:

They've both dressed in drag in the past.

Lee was spotted in a 1977 yearbook photo dressed in a cheerleader's uniform and a wig (he does not pull it off). Schatzline, meanwhile, dressed in drag for a video recorded while he was a student, dancing in a park to a song called "Sexy Lady" while wearing a black sequined dress.

How did these two politicians react when presented with their extraordinary hypocrisy? About like you'd expect. Schatzline said that it was "a joke" and "not a sexually explicit drag show," while Lee dismissed the situation as "ridiculous" and said that his drag performance was not "sexualized entertainment in front of children."

The obvious response to these two would be that a drag story hour at a library isn't "sexualized" or "sexually explicit" either, and they have no idea what a drag performance actually entails because it's not like they would ever watch one before passing a law against it. But there's no point in responding to these two, anyway; they don't care if they contradict



By Ben R. Williams

themselves or look like huge hypocrites. As long as they send the message their voters want to hear and the checks keep rolling in, they're perfectly happy.

The better question is, why drag? Why is this suddenly an issue?

Any middle schooler who's been forced to take a class on Shakespeare knows that in Shakespeare's day, the female roles in plays were played by men dressed as women. Men dressing as women as part of a performance or a lifestyle has been a part of culture for centuries. I doubt the same folks complaining about drag shows had any issue with Milton Berle or Klinger on M*A*S*H. I doubt they're upset about Tyler Perry's "Madea" movies. I doubt they cared too much about glam rock or hair metal; just look up the cover of Poison's album "Look What the Cat Dragged In," in which the four members of the band are so dolled up with big hair and makeup that they make Rip Taylor look like Robert Mitchum.

The idea that these anti-drag bills are designed to protect children from "sexualized entertainment" is absurd. If we, as a nation, actually cared about protecting children from sexualized entertainment, no one under 18 would be allowed in Hooters and child beauty pageants would be criminalized.

In fact, these anti-drag bills aren't even specifically about drag.

This is about criminalizing anyone who doesn't conform to their birth gender.

The new anti-drag bills are all incredibly vague, which is assuredly by design. For example, the Tennessee law bars people from doing drag performance in public in front of children. Let's say someone dresses in drag and simply goes out in public and a child happens to be nearby. Is that a violation of the law? What exactly is a drag performance? Is merely dressing in drag considered a performance? I don't know the answer to that, and I'm guessing the average law enforcement officer on the street isn't going to know either.

It's no coincidence that the Tennessee anti-drag bill was passed alongside legislation that prevents trans minors from receiving puberty blockers, hormones, and surgery. Meanwhile, at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) this past Sunday, right-wing commentator Michael Knowles said that "for the good of society ... transgenderism must be eradicated from public life entirely."

These people are all on the same page and they know exactly what they're doing. The new laws aren't about protecting children, they're about criminalizing the very existence of gender-nonconforming and transgender people. They want to make it a crime for a specific group of people to be themselves.

The concept of a "moral" or "acceptable" portion of society opposing the existence of a "dangerous" out-group is literally one of the core elements of fascism. I would argue that the war currently being waged against transgender and gender-nonconforming people is the first step to a genocide.

Michael Knowles, who believes "transgenderism must be eradicated," would disagree with me. He recently said that it's impossible to commit a genocide of trans people because "it's not a legitimate category of being. ... They're laboring under a delusion. And so we need to correct that delusion."

This is a man who spoke at CPAC, a conference attended by conservative politicians and activists from across this nation and beyond, arguing that eradicating trans people from society wouldn't really be a genocide because they're not a legitimate group of people.

That shouldn't just be terrifying for transgender people; it should be terrifying for everybody in this country. There's a thing about fascists: once they've eradicated one group of people who are destroying society's moral fabric, they always seem to find another.

Temporary Benefits for Several Virginia Assistance Programs Will End Soon

Several medical, food and financial assistance flexibilities and programs administered by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) are set to expire due to recent changes in federal legislation. The programs, which have provided additional benefits and eligibility waivers to many Virginians, were offered on a temporary basis to help households cope with

hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with the recent passing of the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023 announcing the end of the continuous coverage requirement, and approaching end of the federal public health emergency (PHE) on May 11, states will soon return to normal processes, including:

Virginia Medicaid Continuous health coverage will end March 31, with disenrollment beginning no earlier

than April 30. Virginia will return to normal enrollment processes, including redeterminations and processing reductions/closures of health coverage.

Medicaid renewals will continue over a 12-month period. Members should make sure their contact information is up to date to ensure receipt of important information during the transition back to normal operations.

Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)

Final P-EBT benefits will be issued in August, in accordance with the end of the federal public health emergency.

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) for College Students

Expanded eligibility requirements will end June 10, in accordance with the end of the fed-

eral public health emergency. Issuances occur on the 1st, 4th, and 7th of the month.

Additionally, temporary benefits for the following programs have recently ended:

Temporary Cash Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The period of continuous coverage ended, and Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) requirements resumed January 1, 2023.

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Emergency Allotments

Emergency Allotments that raised eligible SNAP households' maximum benefit ended February 16. Households will receive benefits without the additional supplement beginning in March. Issuances occur on the 1st, 4th, and 7th of the month.

VDSS and DMAS are working together to provide information and resources to prepare Virginia families for the upcoming program changes. Along with a dedicated unit of trained staff to support customers during this program transition, VDSS and DMAS have also partnered with health plan providers, community organizations, local schools, institutions of higher learning, and stakeholders to ensure eligible Virginians have access to all available resources, receive assistance in navigating systems, and are able to retain access to food assistance and quality health care coverage.

Households currently receiving assistance through any of the affected programs are strongly encouraged to verify their contact information is up to

date to ensure prompt delivery of important notices and communications related to the upcoming changes. Household information, including mailing addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses can be verified or updated in the following ways:

Commonhelp (Commonhelp.virginia.gov)

For assistance with SNAP, SNAP for College Students, Medicaid, TANF, and P-EBT.

Cover Virginia (CoverVA.org) or call 1-855-242-8282 (TTY: 1-888-221-1590)

For assistance with Medicaid or FAMIS.

Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) are prepared to help with updating contact information and providing information and resources about other Virginia programs.

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Serving Henry County, Martinsville, and Surrounding Area

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE
henrycountyenterprise.com

Weekly Publication
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Michael Showell, Publisher

Debbie Hall, Editor
dhall@theenterprise.net
(276) 694-3101

Randy Thompson, Advertising Manager
advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com
(540) 230-1129

Give us your view:

The Henry County Enterprise encourages letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns. Letters must be signed and have a telephone number where you can be reached to be considered for publication. All letters will be verified before publication. The Henry County Enterprise reserves the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length, content and style.

If you have news about or an upcoming event for your organization, company or church, email dhall@theenterprise.net and/or call (276) 694-3101

Local middle schoolers will have artwork displayed in Piedmont Arts' Foster Gallery

Artwork by students from Carlisle Middle School, Martinsville Middle School, Fieldale-Collinsville Middle School, and Laurel Park Middle School will be on display March 7 through March 18 in Piedmont Arts' Foster Gallery. A reception will be held for exhibiting students and their families, Tuesday, March 14 from 4-6 p.m. at the museum. Piedmont Arts is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Piedmont Arts is known for hosting amazing and innovative exhibits. Nowhere is that truer than in the Foster Gallery. Exhibits are curated every six to eight weeks, allowing work by students from all 19 schools in Martinsville-Henry County to be displayed during the year.

Curated by Charity League of Martinsville and Henry County, the Foster Gallery is an important part of Piedmont Arts' community programming, encouraging young people to participate in the arts and giving the public the opportunity to experience the wealth of talent in the area. Piedmont Arts and Charity League believe that the arts are a vital part of an excellent education, and both are pleased to take an active role in arts education in the community.

Piedmont Arts is a nonprofit art museum located at 215 Starling Ave., Martinsville. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is free. Learn more at PiedmontArts.org.

See more at www.henrycountyenterprise.com

Forestry activities have major economic impact in Virginia

A tree was planted 15 years ago. Today it was harvested. Tomorrow it will be processed into essential fiber, wood products and electricity, and next year another

tree will be replanted in its place. This regenerative cycle of forestry activities produces \$23.6 billion for the state's economy and employs over 108,000

people, comprising Virginia's third-leading private industry. Forestry experts say logging activities are a powerful forest management tool, creating new wildlife habitat and enhancing biodiversity, executed with methods that preserve and improve forested landscapes. Loblolly pine and yellow poplar are the most common trees in terms of vol-

ume, according to the Virginia Department of Forestry. Timber is harvested for lumber, milled, and cut into boards or planks for building materials. Smaller trees, salvage and waste are processed into chips or pellets used for biomass—burned to harness electricity.

While forestry activities occur statewide, Brunswick County is Virginia's most heavily logged area, where loblolly is king.

Planted pine is adaptable and resilient, said forester Joey Jones of M.M. Wright Inc. "We grow them for straightness, height, circumference, pest resistance and growing time," he said.

Hardwood forests don't typically need replanting.

"You can come back to cut the same hardwood site over and over again," said Timothy Goodbar, a Rockbridge County logger. "Plus, young forest is good turkey and deer habitat and allows water to permeate the soil."

In a nearby area, lifelong forester C.K. Greene of Virginia Custom Thinning & Chipping has trained his team to selective-

ly cut undesirable trees, making space in the stand for the best pines to grow big, fast.

"We leave 200 of the biggest and best quality in the stand," he explained. "We take out forked trees, the runts, and leave enough trees per acre to have a valuable crop to grow."

The VDOF-managed Reforestation of Timberlands program helps ensure a stable supply of pine while supporting rural jobs. It provides cost-share assistance to landowners for pine reforestation and is funded by the Virginia Forest Products Tax with matching funds from the state's general fund.

For decades, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation has worked to make timberland owners aware of reforestation incentives while advocating for state matching funds.

"As a grassroots organization, we see the importance of providing landowners with assistance in planting trees and supporting the overall forestry industry," said VBF President Wayne F. Pryor. "The state has the goal to make sure we are planting more trees than we are harvesting. Over a period of time, these practices maintain a supply to support the industry."

Families Encouraged to Sign-up for School Meals as SNAP Emergency Allotments End

No Kid Hungry Virginia is encouraging parents in the commonwealth to fill out free school meal applications to help reduce food costs as emergency SNAP benefits end.

As of March 1, families no longer receive pandemic-era emergency SNAP allotments, which increased the monthly benefit amount for SNAP recipients.

The average SNAP recipient received around \$90 in additional benefits each month thanks to the allotment, according to The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The funds helped parents combat the loss of jobs and wages during the peak of the pandemic, and more recently helped offset the rising inflation and high food prices.

Although the emergency allotment is ending, families can find support by applying for school meal assistance through their local school district.

Free school meals can help eligible families save \$11 to \$39 per month on grocery bills, according to an analysis by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

"Applying for school meals is more important than ever before," said Sarah Steely, Director of No Kid Hungry Virginia. "While they can't replace all the funds families received through the emergency SNAP benefits,

free school meals can help parents save money on groceries that can cover other necessities, while also providing important nourishment for students. Children can't learn on an empty stomach. Please apply now."

Children with families at or below 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals this school year.

Families can submit applications directly to their school or district at any time during the school year.

Filling out an application may help families qualify for additional benefits as well, including discounted exam fees and college applications, extracurriculars and scholarship opportunities.

Many Virginia school districts use a program called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) to serve free meals to all students, in which case free meal applications are not collected. Contact your local school to see if they are part of that program.

Families can reach out to their school nutrition department with any questions related to the free meal application form.

Families can also access information regarding statewide and local resources by contacting 2-1-1 Virginia or visiting the Virginia Department of Social Services' food and other nutritional assistance webpages.

Monogram 'Loves Kids Foundation' now accepting grant applications

Monogram Foods' Monogram Loves Kids Foundation will award \$60,000 to charitable organizations that sponsor programs benefiting children and their families in the Martinsville community. Local 501(c)3 organizations within 100 miles of our plant at 200 Knauss Drive, Martinsville, VA 24112 are now invited to complete an application by visiting <https://monogramfoods.com/what-we-value/community-outreach/>.

Through the annual grants program, Monogram Foods Loves Kids will donate more

than \$650,000 total to charitable organizations in the communities in which Monogram Foods (Monogram) has production facilities. A committee of Monogram team members in each city will select recipients of the grants ranging from \$500 to \$10,000.

The deadline for applications is May 31, by 5 p.m. CT | 4 p.m. ET. Applicants will be notified of the status of the application via email by Friday, September 8, 2023.

The Monogram Foods Loves Kids Foundation Fund (MFLKF)

was established in 2010. It is the 501(c)3 charitable fund of Monogram Foods and is administered by the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis (CFGM). It is funded by Monogram Foods owners, team members, and vendors. To date more than \$16 million has been donated to the fund.

Monogram Foods is a packaged foods producer and private label provider for strategic partners throughout the United States. The company operates a facility in Martinsville-Henry County.

SCC Approves Revised Fuel Factor for Appalachian Power Company

The State Corporation Commission (SCC) approved a revised fuel rate for customers of Appalachian Power Company (APCo) that includes a mitigation proposal that would spread the recovery of its \$361,411,867 deferred fuel balance over two years. The fuel rate increase has been in effect on an interim basis, subject to further modification, since November 1, 2022, and no additional changes were approved. For a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity per month, it represents an increase to the average monthly bill of \$20.17. Without the mitigation proposal, however, the increase would have been \$33.24 per month for the same usage.

The fuel rate is the portion of the electric bill that pays for the fuel used to generate electricity and costs associated with power purchased by the utility company to serve its customers.

In its final order, the Commission stated, "... we are deeply concerned about the significant rate increase requested in this case, and its impact on customer

bills. The impact of the increase is worsened by its introduction during the winter months, which are typically higher usage months, and by other recent APCo rate increases. We are mindful of the numerous public comments and concerns expressed about the impact of such rate increases on APCo's customers and have reviewed this matter carefully. APCo is, however, entitled by law to recover its prudently incurred fuel costs..."

The Commission directed the SCC staff to conduct a fuel audit for the period from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2022, and to include the results of the fuel audit in its pre-filed testimony in APCo's next fuel factor proceeding. As part of the fuel audit, the Commission directed its staff to analyze the reasonableness of APCo's coal procurement activities.

The Commission also directed APCo to take additional steps within 60 days of its order to advise customers how they may contact APCo for bill assistance and to set up budget billing for their accounts.

Credit Union makes headway in the fintech arena

ValleyStar Credit Union is using financial technology (fintech) to drive into the future and meet members where they want to be in their financial journeys.

Fintech refers to the integration of software and mobile applications that make traditional services more accessible and convenient while still keeping funds safe and secure.

ValleyStar realizes that fintech is the future and remains dedicated to building relationships that will improve the use and delivery of

ValleyStar services to members.

"Fintech has been a huge topic of discussion in the financial industry, and we're excited to build relationships that will help move our organization in new and innovative ways," said Justin Barnes, chief lending officer. "Fintech services will allow members to have more financial control at their fingertips than ever before, which will help our vision of being the best in service and convenience become a reality."

Adding fintech products will

diversify ValleyStar's lending portfolio and support the great work of internal lending team members.

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

Discount offered for early connection to new PSA line

The Henry County Public Service Authority (PSA) is offering a limited-time discount for customers looking to connect to a new water line scheduled to be installed on Elf Trail in Bassett.

The PSA will offer a \$1,000 discount towards the connection and facility fees for any time prior to, and for a 60-day period from, completion of the project.

This will make the standard residential connection fee \$750. Upon expiration of the 60-day period, the connection and facility fees will be based on the prevailing rates when the application is made for service. The connection and facility fees may be paid or financed at a flat rate of five percent for a 12 or 24-month period.

The PSA encourages everyone in the Elf Trail project area to connect to the new water system, if at all possible, but there are no mandatory connection or non-user fees associated with this project. Those who choose not to connect to the system will still receive the benefits of fire protection throughout the system and increased property values.

A PSA Water User Agreement and Connection/Service Application has been mailed to residents in the project area. Those wishing to connect to the new water line must sign the application and return it by April 10, 2023. The agreement and application is a legal and binding contract that will commit the applicant to payment upon notification. If an agreement and application is not received by April 10, it will be assumed the resident does not want a water connection installed on their property.

As with all residential connections, the property owner is responsible for all costs associated with the service line running from the meter to the structure being served, including installation and maintenance.



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OBITUARIES

Louise Fulcher Warren

Louise Fulcher Warren, 80, of Rocky Mt., Virginia passed away on March 4, 2023. She was born in Henry County, Virginia on May 13, 1942, to the late Thurman Fulcher and Lizzie Roberts Fulcher. She was preceded in death by husbands, Charles Franklin Stanley, Sr., Daniel Hooker, and Barney Warren; as well as stepfather, Jessie G. Sims.



Duffy (Frank) and Linda F. Williams (Mike); three stepdaughters, Lisa Setliff (David), Mickie Chester, and Inez Warren; niece, nephew, several step-grandchildren, step-nieces, and step-nephews.

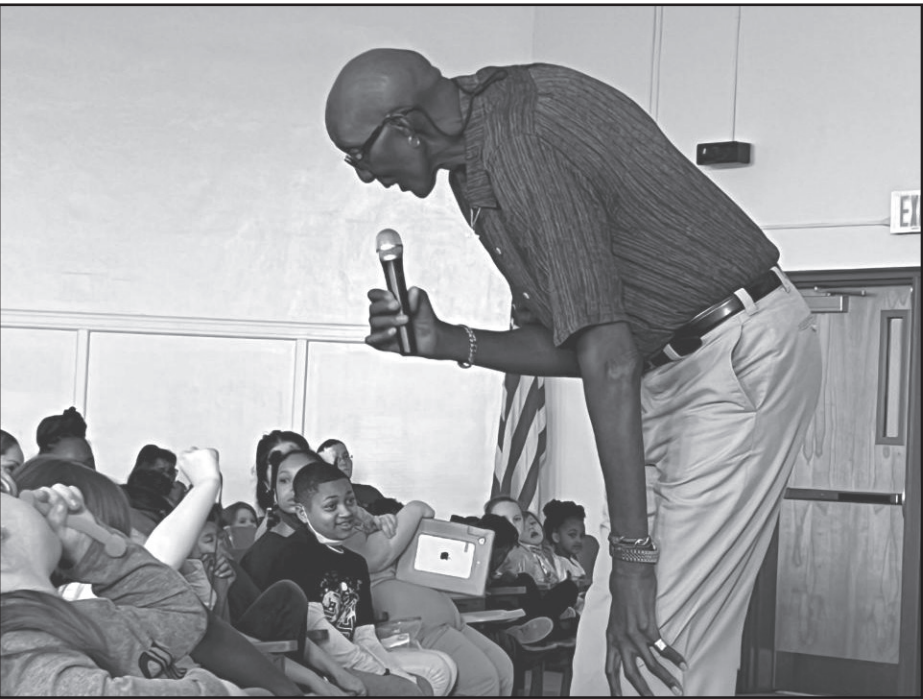
The funeral service was held on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at Norris Funeral Services in Martinsville with Minister David Deisher officiating. Visitation was one hour prior to the service, and other times at the home of her daughter, Cindy. Burial will be at the Stanley Family Cemetery.

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

She worked as a hairdresser for many years in Martinsville and Henry County.

Louise is survived by a son, Charles Franklin Stanley, Jr.; daughter, Cindy Stanley Hodges (Kenny); grandson, Joshua Hodges; sisters, Barbara F.

Bell



The tallest man in America is pictured bending to make eye contact with Albert Harris Elementary School students during a bullying prevention program. Bell towers over students and most adults at 7 feet, 8 inches tall.



George Bell, described as a gentle giant, took time from his busy schedule to discuss bullying with students in Martinsville.

Virginia. "A local kid took her life, she was a prominent student that had the chance to go to college with a full scholarship," he said. Bell indicated cyberbullying was the cause of the incident. "I saw that story on the news and it hit me hard, I felt like I wanted to do something," said Bell. He hopes to educate students on the resources they have available and to take advantage of those resources if they are faced with bullying. He stressed the importance of telling someone if you

are dealing with bullying. "You must open your mouth and tell somebody, that's the only way to counteract bullying," Bell said. He said that his height prevented bullying from being an issue for him. "I've been tall all my life," he said. Bell stands 7 feet, 8 inches tall, and wears a size 19 shoe. A gentle giant, Bell was also a former basketball player with both the Harlem Globetrotters and the Harlem Wizards. He currently lives in Durham, North Carolina when he's not traveling.

Harvest Foundation joins mental health collaborative

The Harvest Foundation is collaborating with 17 other philanthropic foundations throughout Virginia to fund expanded REACH behavioral health trainings for primary care providers treating children, adolescents and young adults across the Commonwealth. These foundations contributed more than \$170,000 in an effort to address the growing need for improved access to mental health care.

"We provided an investment of \$10,000 to support this training so our mental health practitioners in Martinsville-Henry County will have additional tools available to serve our community," said Kate Keller, president of The Harvest Foundation. "The need for behavioral health services has increased steadily, largely due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we're committed to supporting proven programs that strengthen our local services for behavioral health."

The primary goal of the Virginia Mental Health Access Program (VMAP) is to ensure better mental health for children. Through education initiatives, training, and access to specialists, primary care providers are better equipped to screen, diagnose, manage, and treat mental health, ensuring better quality of life for children and their families. VMAP will coordinate two REACH trainings serv-

ing up to 80 primary care providers.

These intensive three-day, 16-hour interactive courses for physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants build skills and confidence in diagnosing and treating pediatric behavioral health problems. Following course completion, they participate in bi-monthly calls with national primary care and child/adolescent psychiatry experts to address cases in their daily practices.

The Medical Society of Virginia Foundation (MSVF) administers the VMAP program through a contract with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. Melina Davis, CEO of MSV & Executive Director of MSVF, said, "To have the philanthropic community come together in support of this work has been incredible. We're hopeful that the impact of these trainings will benefit all of Virginia by improving education and resources for youth mental health."

According to Fairfax pediatrician and VMAP Founder, Dr. Sandy Chung, "Our foundation partners responded quickly in a meaningful way to help us address pediatric behavioral health needs - needs that are growing exponentially, outpacing the availability of mental health providers. The pandemic worsened a youth mental health crisis that was already present. We now have

more young people than ever before suffering from anxiety, depression, and thoughts of self-harm. With VMAP, primary care providers can be prepared with the best information to help children and their families right away."

Participating foundations include:

- The Alleghany Foundation
 - The Annabella Jenkins Foundation
 - Bob and Anna Lou Schaberg Foundation
 - Claude Moore Charitable Foundation
 - Community Foundation for Greater Richmond
 - Community Foundation for Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties
 - The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia
 - Culpeper Wellness Foundation
 - Danville Regional Foundation
 - The Harvest Foundation
 - Northern Piedmont Community Foundation
 - Northern Virginia Health Foundation
 - PATH Foundation
 - Potomac Health Foundation
 - Richmond Memorial Health Foundation
 - Virginia Health Care Foundation
 - Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia
 - Williamsburg Health Foundation
- Visit www.vmap.org for more information about The Virginia Mental Health Assistance Program and REACH.

Non-profit launches fund for community enrichment, Grassroots Grants, a project of One Family Productions

A perennial leader in live music and public event planning, One Family Productions (OFP) announced today the launch of a community-based micro-grant program to spur innovation and collaboration in the region, Grassroots Grants (GRG).

Accessible to Patrick County and surrounding areas, GRG is the latest initiative from OFP, the award-winning team behind First Friday Summer Jam Series, Bushels & Barrels Local Food, Wine & Beer Festival, Road to the Porch concert series, Front Porch Fest, and the Patrick County Christmas Parade. Today's announcement represents an expansion of OFP's mission to include direct investment in education, creative placemaking, art, and culture in the community.

"Grassroots Grants has been cultivated slowly - as ideas of how to be intentional and impactful have evolved over the years, our capacity and collective efforts have grown as well. We've always believed in giving back, but we wanted to do more with Grassroots Grants," noted OFP Board President, Sarah Wray. "We want to partner with and invest in the people and ideas that improve the places we live and work. We recognize that sometimes a little goes a long way, and the most important component of community growth is planting the first seed. Grassroots Grants is an investment directly into the change we

wish to see and an opportunity to usher those investments through to successful outcomes. One Family Productions is committed to helping empower the changemakers in our community."

Since its incorporation in 2013, OFP has made repeated strides in developing new venues and performance spaces within the region, as well as pioneering public events that bring people together to showcase the potential concentrated here. With the launch of a micro-granting initiative, OFP opens a new avenue for discovering and cultivating fresh resources within the region. By supporting innovative, impact-oriented projects, OFP will inspire and mobilize a coming generation of passionate people to make the experiences and venues in our region even more sought-after and cherished.

Of this recent announcement, OFP Vice President Brad Crouch says, "With this program we hope to tap into the insight, drive, and motivation that the people of this community have to promote and expand community enrichment and growth in line with One Family's mission." Applications for GRG will be accepted on a rolling basis and will be reviewed by a committee consisting of OFP directors and members at large. More information on Grassroots Grants and the full application are available on the OFP website. www.onefamilyproductions.org/grassroots-grants/.

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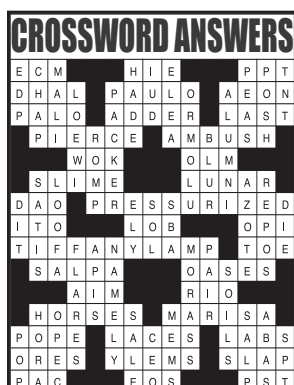
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For more information, call the office at (276) 694-3101



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

Martinsville schools celebrate reading initiative

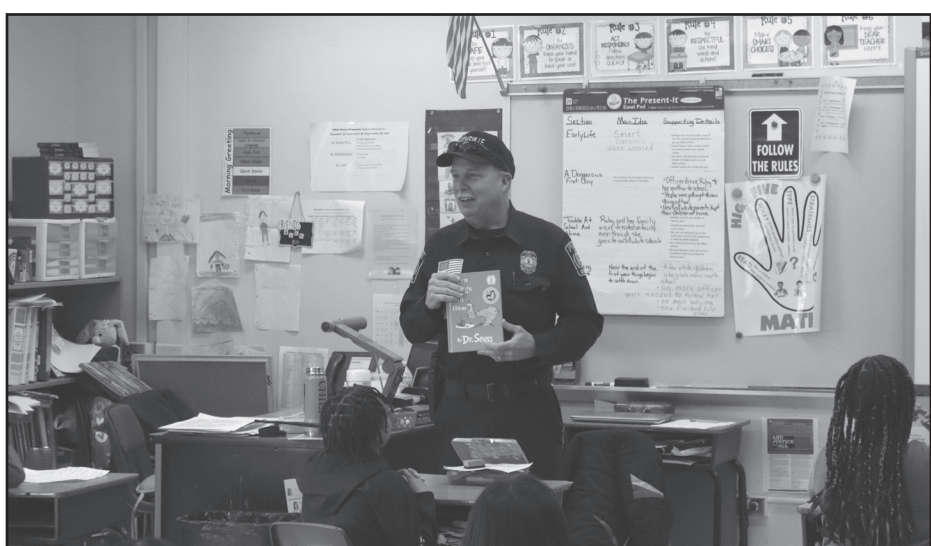
Martinsville City Public Schools (MCPS) has been celebrating Read Across America Week by inviting special guest readers from our district and from our community to come read a story to a class of elementary or preschool students.

Clearview Early Childhood Center has also been doing a Teacher Tuck In each evening, during which one of our teachers reads students a bedtime story via Zoom.

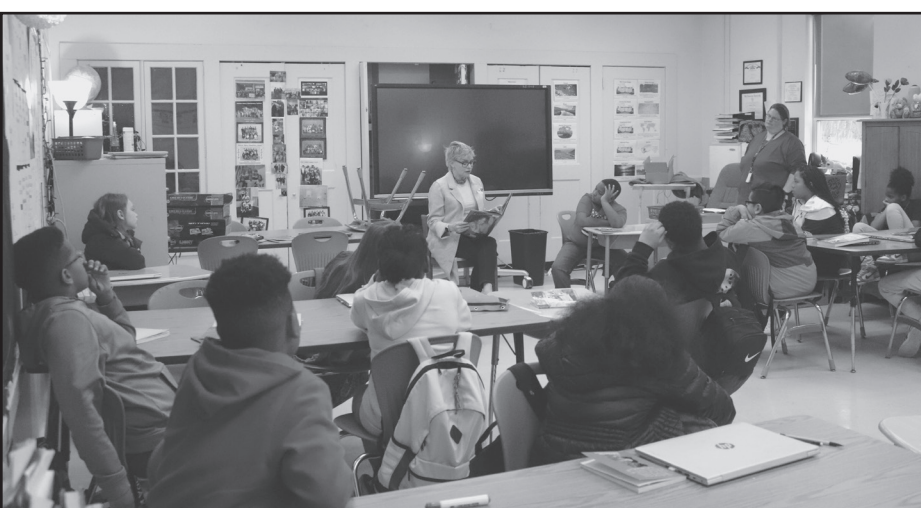
Guest readers for this year's Read Across America Week have included members of Martinsville City Council, school board members, firefighters, police, some of our high school basketball and football players, and others. A

sampling includes:

- Retired Martinsville Fire Chief (and current part-time firefighter) Ted Anderson
- Martinsville City Council member Tammy Pearson
- Martinsville Codes Compliance Inspector Mark Price
- Martinsville Mayor LC Jones
- MCPS Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Dr. Angilee Downing
- MCPS Coordinator of Humanities and Advanced Learning Cary Wright
- MCPS Coordinator of Human Resources Yani Smith
- MCPS Superintendent Dr. Zebedee Talley



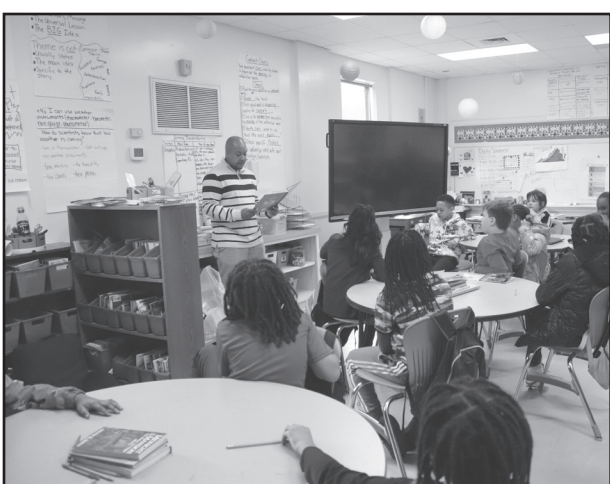
Retired Martinsville Fire Chief Ted Anderson



Martinsville City Council Member Tammy Pearson



Martinsville Codes Compliance Inspector Mark Price



Martinsville Mayor LC Jones



MCPS Asst Superintendent of Instruction Dr Angilee Downing



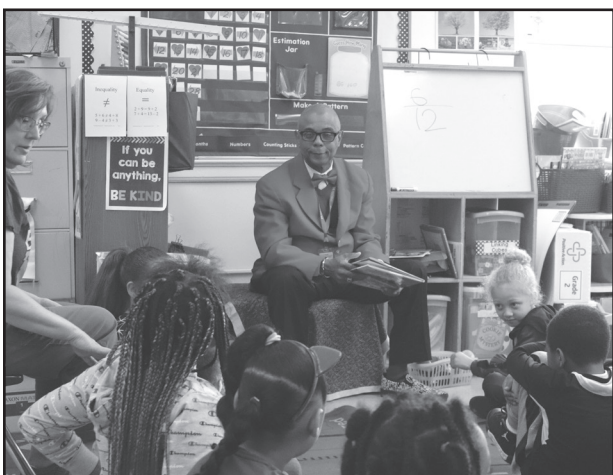
MCPS Coordinator of Humanities and Advanced Programs Cary Wright



MCPS Coordinator of STEM Math and Science Jill Collins



MCPS Director of Human Resources Yani Smith



MCPS Superintendent Dr Zebedee Talley

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

All real estate advertised in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitations or discrimination based on race, color, sex or national origin," or an intention to make any such preferences, limitation or discrimination. Our readers are informed that all dwellings advertised in this paper are available on an equal opportunity basis. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate or employment which is in violation of the law.

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HELP WANTED

Patrick & Henry Community College in Martinsville, VA has the following job openings:

- ASCT Administrative Assistant
https://jobs.vccs.edu/postings/58424
Minimum qualifications: Associate degree, administrative support experience, and experience working with students or customers.
Salary range: \$36,000-\$41,000
- Nursing & Health Sciences Assistant:
https://jobs.vccs.edu/postings/58349
Minimum qualifications: Associate Degree in Administrative Support Services, or related, with three years of office experience.

HELP WANTED

Salary range: 35,500-\$38,500
Director of Planning and Evaluation
https://jobs.vccs.edu/postings/57703
Minimum qualifications: Master's degree from an accredited institution, advanced KSAs in planning and evaluations, experience in obtaining and maintaining educational accreditation or evaluation by an external body, and budget experience.
Salary range: \$80,000-\$90,000
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.

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COUNTY OF HENRY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a public hearing has been scheduled for **March 29, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd., Collinsville, Virginia. The purpose of this public hearing is to receive citizen input into the possible issuance of a Special Use Permit for the following case.
Case S-23-05 Stephen Hayes
A request for a Special Use Permit has been received under Section 21-302 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the use of the property as an event center with a potential dance hall permit. The property is located at 5780 Figsboro Rd, in the Reed Creek District and shown on Tax Map 7.9/34,35,30B. The property is zoned Agricultural District A-1.
The application for this request may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
Lee H. Clark, AICP
Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard, in the Board Meeting Room on the first floor of the Henry County Administration Building on Kings Mountain Road in Collinsville, Virginia.
The purpose of the public hearing is to receive citizen input on a proposed amendment to the Henry County Code of Ordinances regarding dog licenses.
A copy of the full text of the ordinance may be viewed in the County Administrator's Office in the Henry County Administration Building, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
Dale Wagoner
County Administrator

If you've read this far, you can see how a classified ad in the Henry County Enterprise can work.

Let our readers know you're hiring with a classified ad in The Enterprise for as little as \$8 a week.



STAGS Robotics Team 1262 Competes in First Tournament

The New College Institute's Robotics Team 1262, the STAGS (Students Technologically Advancing for Greater Success), participated in their first competition of the season as part of the FIRST Chesapeake District. The tournament was held in Blacksburg, VA, March 3-5.

More than 110 high school teams competed in the FIRST Robotics Competition Challenge, CHARGED UP. The NCI STAGS Team 1262, featuring an all-new mentorship, ranked 14 in the overall standings. Each match presents challenges to overcome, repairs to be made, and incredible insights on how design and capabilities can be improved.

STAG members have been practicing together 6 days a week since early January, turning imagination, plans and parts into a fully working, personable, functional robot with a purpose and even a name (ClankerR).



New College Institute's (NCI's) Robotics Team 1262, the STAGS (Students Technologically Advancing for Greater Success), participated in its first competition of the season March 3-5 in Blacksburg, as part of the FIRST Chesapeake District. (Contributed photo)

"The STAGS 1262 FIRST Chesapeake Robotics Team has been called "iconic" by so many people this weekend. We are known for our awesome uniforms, respect for other teams and mentors, and the FIRST Robotics Core Values," said Joanie Petty, STAGS team mentor.

"We are incredibly proud of the STAGS for their hard work and dedication to this competition," Petty said. "They have put in countless

hours of effort and collaboration to get to this point, and it's great to see that pay off in their successful debut."

The STAGS are excited about participating in upcoming competitions and continuing to inspire other students to pursue their passion for robotics.

FIRST Robotics is an international program that challenges teams of high school students to design, build, and program robots to compete in a series of challenges.



Southern Gentlemen return to Historical Center

The Historical Center will host the Southern Gentlemen Bluegrass Band at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 28 March. The free concert will be held in the Susan L. Adkins Memorial Meeting Room.

The Southern Gentlemen Band was founded by Johnny Johnson on May 12, 1999. These "Gentlemen" are a Traditional Bluegrass and Bluegrass Gospel Band committed to preserving "TRUE AND REAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC." They have been featured

on Nationwide Television including PBS, RFDTV and Blue Highways TV as well as being featured on radio broadcasts and worldwide on the internet. They are committed to giving their fans and audience 100% on their shows with over 140 years of combined professional showmanship. One of the distinctive features of the Southern Gentlemen is their wealth of original material. It is not uncommon for the band to feature a new song at just about every show.

Work begins on Piedmont Arts' Pollinator Trail



Piedmont Arts staff at the groundbreaking of the Pollinator Trail, which will include beds of native and noninvasive plant species to attract local pollinators and the community Pictured (from left) are Jessica Graham, Heidi Pinkston, Bernadette Moore, Sarah Short, Lauren Ellis, and Pam Allen.

Taylor Boyd
Staff writer

Piedmont Arts held a groundbreaking ceremony on Feb. 16 to celebrate the start of construction on its Project Hope Pollinator Trail.

C.D. Prillaman, of Prillaman Landscaping Dimensions, broke ground at the site of a new pollinator garden trail. Funded by The Harvest Foundation's Project Hope, a grant designed to fund projects that inspire hope in the community.

Lauren Ellis, Programs and Public Relations Coordinator, said the foundation "wanted to create a funding opportunity for projects that would spark hope in the community."

Ellis said projects considered for grant funds had to be for and accessible by the community in a way that would either "spark imagination, motivation, or something that would let them be a part of this thing."

Piedmont Arts dedicated a section of unused land to the cultivation of an ADA-compliant, accessible path that will be flanked by beds of native and non-invasive pollinator plants. In addition, there will be a small section of raised beds for an Adopt-A-Bed program that will encourage community ownership and education. The pathway will span from the parking lot of Piedmont Arts to the Gravelly-Lester Art Garden. Future plans for the trail will see it expand across Mulberry Road and connect to the Silverbell Trail, an offshoot of the Dick & Willie Trail," she said.

While Project Hope is for the community, Ellis believes employees at Piedmont Arts are finding that it's sparking a lot of hope in themselves.

"It's something that we are all extremely excited about," she said. "We're excited about the possibilities of what it can do for us and the community."

Volunteer days will get underway once the infrastructure of the trail is complete. These might include tilling, planting, and plant bed construction. There will also be opportunities for artists to create signage and other work for the trail. Community members who would like to be involved may e-mail Ellis at lellis@piedmontarts.org.

said. "It will cultivate pollinator plants for local pollinators. It's going to just be an opportunity for education and cultivation and it's kind of like a beautification project."

Ellis added the plant beds could also potentially become part of an adopt event program.

"There's a potential opportunity for folks to come in and really get their hands dirty and help with the actual preservation of the garden," she said.

Piedmont Arts hopes to have the 1,500-foot project completed by June.


While the pollinator trail is the first phase of the project, Ellis said the goal is to look for more funding to extend the trail across the street, and "involve the First Baptist Church, the VMNH (Virginia Museum of Natural History), the YMCA, and One Starling."

That would result in "a separate little section of this pollinator trail, and then connect the whole thing to the Silver Bell Trail, an offshoot of the Dick & Willie Trail," she said.

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