

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, May 13, 2023

(USPS-6)

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Former Collinsville YMCA finds new life as Henry County Recreation Center



Several residents joined with county officials and staff to celebrate the opening of the Henry County Recreation Center, the first indoor site for activities in the county.

By Tara Lucas

A former YMCA facility had a face-lift and now is the new Henry County Recreation Center - the first indoor facility for activities in the county.

Located at 395 W. John Redd Blvd., the building that previously housed the Collinsville YMCA has been fully remodeled with new paint, flooring, and lighting.

Activities geared toward local seniors will be offered daily, including Rook, Canasta, Bridge, and bingo. Fitness programs such as Zumba, yoga, and even line dancing will also be offered. Senior computer classes will be held over the summer in the new computer lab.

"We have a vibrant senior community and senior population," said Roger Adams, director of Henry County Parks and Recreation.

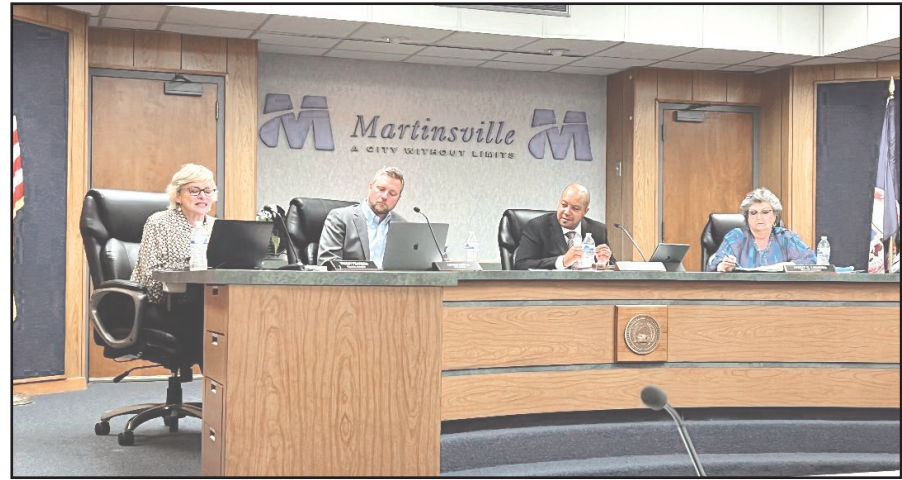
The facility will also host the Miss Henry County Fair contest in June, summer camps for students, and a Daddy/



Collinsville District Supervisor Joe Bryant and Roger Adams, director of Henry County Parks and Recreation, are pictured at a ribbon cutting for the Henry County Recreation Center, the county's first indoor facility for activities.

Daughter dance in February, amongst other things. A kid's cooking class will be held in the new kitchen space as a part of the summer camps offered.

See Rec Center, page 2



Members of Martinsville City Council heard a number of speakers Tuesday, many expressing concern about a recent reassessment and the city's real estate tax rate.

Reassessment, higher taxes spark concerns among city residents

By Tara Lucas and Debbie Hall

The equivalent of a 20.9 percent real estate tax increase for the upcoming fiscal year drew the ire of some residents at a public hearing during Martinsville City Council's meeting Tuesday.

"I think this budget and property assessment is totally out of line," Ural Harris said of the increase that is the result of a 2022 reassessment of properties in the city.

According to information from the Commissioner of the

Revenue's office, the total assessed value of the real property, excluding additional assessments due to new construction or improvements to the property, exceeded last year's total by 20.32 percent due to the recently completed biennial reassessment.

A lowered rate that would offset the increased assessment and levy the same amount of real estate tax as last year would be \$0.86 per \$100 of assessed value, City Manager Leon Towarnicki said.

In the proposed FY24 budget presented to the council on April 25, the real estate tax rate

is proposed to be left as is, at \$1.04 per \$100 of assessed value, which is an effective tax rate increase of 20.9 percent or the equivalent of \$0.18 per \$100, Towarnicki said.

The effective tax rate increase is expected to generate \$1.2 to \$1.3 million in additional revenue that is included in the proposed FY24 budget, with each \$0.01 generating approximately \$70,000 in revenue, he added.

Harris suggested the council consider rolling the proposed tax rate back to \$0.87 per \$100

See Reassessment, page 3



Marcia Lexa, director of School Nutrition for the county school division, is pictured with the bus used as a mobile eatery.

Feeding program to continue in county schools

By Tara Lucas

Henry County Schools will continue its summer feeding program this year. Due to a changed regulation by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the program can provide non-congregate meals instead of having to eat at a designated site.

"Many students can't come to a site every day due to transportation," said Marcia Lexa, director of School Nutrition for the division. She added there are several children who are food insecure in the area who can benefit from the program.

Parents will be able to pick up meals at designated schools for the entire week. Additional information will be distributed in early May about how students can get signed up for the program. Parents will need to indicate how many children are in their household so that an adequate number of meals

are prepared. If a parent is unable to pick up, it is also important to notify program staff to prevent the preparation of excess food.

Registration is not required for the use of mobile feeding sites. The meals bus will be available at the Fieldale Community Center Monday-Thursday at 1 p.m. Children ages 1-18 may pick up a meal for free, and parents may purchase a meal for \$3. There may be an additional mobile site added at a service organization.

Summer school students will eat on-site breakfast

and lunch. On Thursdays, those students will be able to take home meals for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

"We are looking for workers and volunteers," Lexa said. Individuals are needed to help prepare and pack the meals for distribution.

More information will be available on the website www.henry.k12.va.us under the "about" section and select the summer meals program. Parents can also text the word FOOD to 304304 to get information about feeding sites.



The inside of a bus that's used at a mobile eating site. Currently, the meals bus will be available at the Fieldale Community Center Monday-Thursday at 1 p.m., but other sites may be added.

Search for new county superintendent underway

Taylor Boyd
Staff writer

The search for the next Henry County Schools superintendent is currently underway, as the current superintendent, Dr. Sandy Strayer, plans to leave her position on June 30 to become the Harvest Foundation's new health and education program officer.

Teddy Martin, chairman of the Henry County School Board, said interviews are currently underway.

"So far, we've gotten a good-sized pool and we've started doing interviews, and we're hopeful," he said.

Martin said he and the division still anticipate meeting the July 1 goal, and potentially not needing an interim between Strayer's departure and hiring the new superintendent.

"But it is a search so anything can happen. I can't really make a promise there, but that's the way it's progressing," he said.

Both internal and external candidates are interested in the position, according to Martin, who said the division is seeking a candidate that has the characteristics the community mentioned in surveys and at the listening sessions the division held.

"Many (characteristics) were pretty common," he said. "We're looking for someone who's a leader, accountable, has had many different levels of experience in the school system, an educator, someone, if they're from here or not from here, would be invested in our community."

"We're not looking to be a stepping stone for anybody, we're looking to be an employer of choice and lead our division," Martin added.

The division held four listening sessions with about two dozen people attending to give their perspectives.

"Obviously, they didn't all necessarily agree. There were some that said go internal and some that said go external. But in terms of the actual characteristics, they were relatively consistent in what they were looking for in a person," he said.

One thing Martin found interesting was that people wanted to make sure the division didn't require a doctorate for the position.

"We don't. It's a preferred qualification for the job posting. But I found it somewhat interesting because historically we hired (former superintendent) Anthony Jackson, who did not have a doctorate, and Sandy Strayer did not have a doctorate. I don't think we have had

a reputation for insisting upon a doctorate," he said. "I think it's an interesting dynamic of that perspective," he said.

Martin is unaware if the division plans to send out additional surveys or hold more listening sessions.

"I always want input. I don't view this as 'tell me what you want then we're done,'" he said.

On the other hand, given the timeframe the division is looking at and the confidentiality component of the search, Martin does not know if another round of listening sessions could be held.

While he does not know how long the search will take, Martin said he is hoping for a period of transition that would allow the next superintendent to learn from Strayer.

Regardless, Martin said he feels confident the school division and Strayer will do their best to ensure a seamless transition.

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UPDATES



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Events

Friday, May 12

Music Night at the Spencer Penn Centre, with the Slate Mountain Ramblers playing in Alumni Hall. The gate opens at 5 p.m. Music begins at 6:15 p.m. Admission is a \$5 donation. Concessions will be sold.

Monday, May 15

The Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) College Board Budget & Finance Committee will meet at 11:30 a.m. in Room 124 in the Frith Economic Development Center. While this is a public meeting, public comments will not be accepted.

The Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) College Board Academic & Student Affairs Committee will meet at 11:30 in room 215 in the Frith Economic Development Center. While this is a public meeting, public comments will not be accepted.

The Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) College Board Executive Committee will meet at 11:45 in room 145 in the Frith Economic Development Center. While this is a public meeting, public comments will not be accepted.

Thursday, May 18

The Salvation Army is giving away new clothes and shoes in sizes for adults and children, 10:30 a.m.- 2 p.m. in the Salvation Army gym at 603 Memorial Blvd. S. Martinsville.

Saturday May 20

Butterfly Painting Workshop with Award Winning Artist - Lisa Garrett, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Imagination Lavender Farm, 3590 Green Hill Drive, Martinsville, To register call or text (276) 734-2828. Limited Seating - \$40 includes supplies and a light lunch.

Entry opens at 10 a.m. for the Expressions Artwork exhibit at Piedmont Arts. Submissions are accepted from all artists living within a 100-mile radius of Martinsville. Artwork submitted for entry must have been completed within the last three years. Work previously exhibited in Expressions is not eligible. Up to two pieces of art may be submitted per artist. Unlike a juried exhibition, Expressions is open-entry, and all submitted works in compliance with the entry rules are accepted. Cash prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place in seven categories, as well as purchase awards, the Lynwood Artists Award and Best In Show.

Tuesday, May 23-Saturday, May 27

Monet & Milkshakes Painting Class with a Frozen Dessert, free class for ages 18 and up, at 2:30 p.m. in branches of the Blue Ridge Regional Library: Ridgeway, May 23; Collinsville, May 24; Bassett, May 26; Martinsville (main), May 27. Registration is required by calling the branch of interest.

Friday, June 2

Expressions Opening Reception, 5:30 p.m. at Piedmont Arts. Free and open to the public. Complimentary wine and light refreshments will be served.

Saturday, June 3

Patrick Henry Volunteer Fire Department's Hamburger Steak Fundraiser, 4 to 7 p.m. at 3125 County Line Road, Patrick Springs. Plates include hamburger steak, slaw, baked beans, French fries, dessert and drink for \$10. Eat in or take out, call (276) 629-7677.

ONGOING

Saturdays, April 29-November 18

Martinsville Uptown Farmers' Market is open from 7 a.m. to noon, with the freshest fruits and veggies, homemade snacks, locally raised beef, and more. July 5-September 27, the market is open Wednesdays from 7 a.m. to noon.

Free 'Shred Days' set for April, hosted by ValleyStar Credit Union.

May 19, Martinsville Speedway, Martinsville, 1 to 6 p.m.

May 20, ValleyStar Collinsville branch, Collinsville, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

June 3, ValleyStar Roanoke branch, Roanoke/Rocky Mount, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

RSVP for reminders as the date(s) approaches, or for more information, visit ValleyStar Credit Union's Facebook.

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.

Book Bingo on the 4th Tuesday of the month at the Martinsville Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library, 11 a.m. to noon. Call (276) 403-5430 to register.

The Disability Rights and Resource Center (DRRC) will be represented at the Henry-Martinsville Health Department in Martinsville every third Wednesday afternoon to provide information to health department visitors about DRRC and its services.

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. 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. 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.

Rec Center from page 1



The new indoor Henry County Recreation Center.



The gym in the Henry County Recreation Center will be used for a number of activities.

"We have activities here almost every day for seniors, we have children's activities, just a wide variety of activities for folks to come participate in," Adams said. "We also have the new Henry County Dog Park that's behind the building. It's a beautiful dog park for people to come and let their dogs get some exercise in a safe environment."

He added the center and its offerings "would not be possible without our maintenance staff."

Citing problems with the roof, air conditioner, and overall condition of the building, Collinsville District Supervisor Joe Bryant praised the maintenance staff for their hard



Computer classes will be offered in the Computer Lab.

work on the building.

"You can tell they did a lot of work to it," Bryant said, and also praised Adams for his efforts with the project.

"Roger is on the job all the time. Parks and Rec is probably one of the most important things in the county. Roger is into trying to help senior citizens and help Henry County as a whole," Bryant said.

The Henry County Recreation Center is the 27th park facility in the county. Additional information about activities and programs can be found online at www.henrycountyyva.gov.

Residents Urged to Stay Vigilant Against Cyber Fraud

United States Attorney Christopher R. Kavanaugh released a video public service announcement today to news media throughout the Western District of Virginia that urges residents to stay vigilant against cyber fraud, investment schemes, and other forms of online deception.

"Fraudsters are using high-pressure tactics and promises of low or no risk investments in an attempt to steal the hard-earned money of our citizens, especially our seniors," Kavanaugh said. "The United States Attorney's Office, along with our law enforcement partners at the federal, state and local levels, are committed to protecting you."

These scammers often reach out by phone, text message or email, claiming high returns on investments,

often in the form of crypto-currency. They are becoming more creative, sophisticated, and aggressive.

"To protect yourself, never send money to anyone you do not know and research who you are investing your hard-earned money with," Kavanaugh added. "If you feel rushed, or if you are told not to discuss the investment opportunity with others, you are being scammed."

For more information about these scams, or what to do if you feel you have been a victim of a scam, please visit FBI.gov.

In addition to being sent to local media stations, the PSA has also been posted to the Western District of Virginia's newly launched YouTube page: https://www.youtube.com/@usao_wdva.

Manning Graduates from Bridgewater College

India Manning of Martinsville graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Bridgewater College during the April 29, 2023, Commencement exercises.

Approximately 315 undergraduate and 25 graduate students from the Class of 2023 received degrees. Dr. David W. Bushman, president of Bridgewater College, conferred the degrees.

Rev. Dr. Robbie Miller '79, college chaplain, served as the Commencement speaker for 2023. In his address, "The Measure of Success," he said, "The measure of success in our brief span of life-represented by that little 'dash' between the year we're born and the year we die-is not the money we earn or the things we accumulate or the degrees we acquire or the recognition we receive, but the love we share and the difference we make."

Among the 313 undergraduate students in the Class of 2023, 159

earned Bachelor of Arts degrees and 154 earned Bachelor of Science degrees. Thirty-two 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. Forty 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 53 graduates.

Bridgewater College graduated students from four different master's programs. Three students graduated with a Master of Science in psychology-mental health professions; three students graduated with a Master of Arts in digital media strategy; six students graduated with a master of science in athletic training; and 13 students graduated with a master of science in human resource management.

Bridgewater College is a private, four-year liberal arts college located in the Central Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

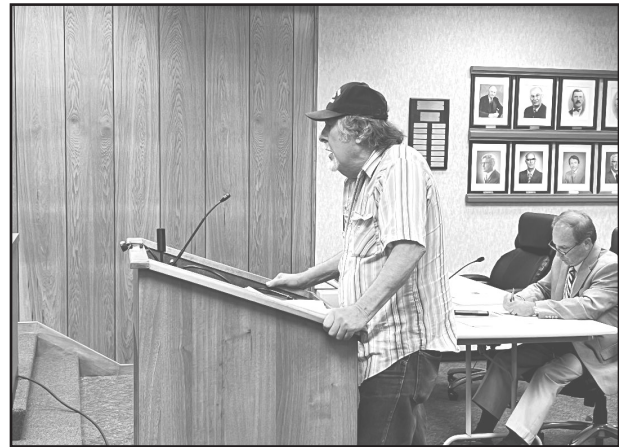
Reassessment from page 1



Larissa Deedrich, the executive director, provided an update about the Center for Housing Education in Martinsville.



City Building Inspector Chris Bridges and council member Kathy Lawson.



Ural Harris was among those to lobby the council for lowered tax rates

of assessed value, which would represent a one-percent increase from the current rate. Harris said the smaller increase was fair and should be sufficient.

Noting his experience in commercial real estate appraisal, Michael Green expressed concerns with the tax assessment increases. Houses near his neighborhood of Oakdale Street were among his main concerns, with one of the homes increasing 36 percent in assessed value without any improvements being made to the property.

Green also noted that most of the rental properties had no increases in assessed value.

"I have a lot of questions for the tax assessor on how they came up with these increases," Green said, and noted that 33 percent of the city's property information cards contained inaccurate information.

Don Bredamus said the increase will represent a difference of \$540 per year that he will have to pay.

"I'm not gaining more but I'm paying more. People who have struggling incomes are going to be hurt tremendously by maintaining the tax rate as it is," Bredamus said.

He said the tax rate could be a deterrent for residents, and added that if someone is looking to move to the area, they likely would choose to live in the county due to the cheaper tax rate.

A public hearing is mandated by state law when the assessment of real property results in an increase of one percent or more in the total real property tax levied.

In other matters, the council:

*Approved a resolution supporting "mixed-use" of the McCollum-Ferrell building at 16-18 East Church Street. Towarnicki said he believes the property is a good match for mixed use for the uptown area. The council voted to approve the

resolution.

*Heard an update from the Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (DRHA) on the recently opened Center for Housing Education in Martinsville. The center works with roughly 250 clients per year and has assisted with over 150 home purchases by providing resources and down payment assistance. It is bringing a program called the Family Self Sufficiency program to the area, a HUD-funded five-year program that is designed to prepare individuals for financial success. The center is located in the Chief Tassel Building at 51 East Church Street.

*Presented a proclamation to City Building Inspector Chris Bridges after deeming May 2023 as Building Safety Month.

*Set a public hearing for the FY2024 budget for the May 23 council meeting.

Rudy's Girl Media holds Grand Opening



A ribbon cutting was held Tuesday at Rudy's Girl Media, 30 W Main Street, Uptown Martinsville.

By Tara Lucas

Rudy's Girl Media celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting on Tuesday at its location 30 W Main Street in uptown Martinsville. The business is a multi-media content development company focusing on film, television, short-form digital content, and social media content development.

"We have our own in-house content such as Hometown Hustle which tells the story of small

businesses in small towns that make a big impact," said Rudy's Girl founder and owner Natalie Hodge. The company also has made short films Sell and Stolen Crowns, which were filmed locally using local talent and crew members.

She also assists companies and organizations with content development.

"It might be a capital campaign video, it might be a training video or commercial," she said.

Hodge hopes the new space will provide individuals with an opportunity

to explore their creative side through film.

The business plans to offer workshops and training soon to help individuals with projects. Individuals will also be able to rent studio space and use the Equipment at Rudy's Girl Media to produce their own content.

Hodge is a recent winner of the Gauntlet business competition.

"I highly recommend anyone that is trying to

See Rudy's, page 5



Talley meets new state superintendent

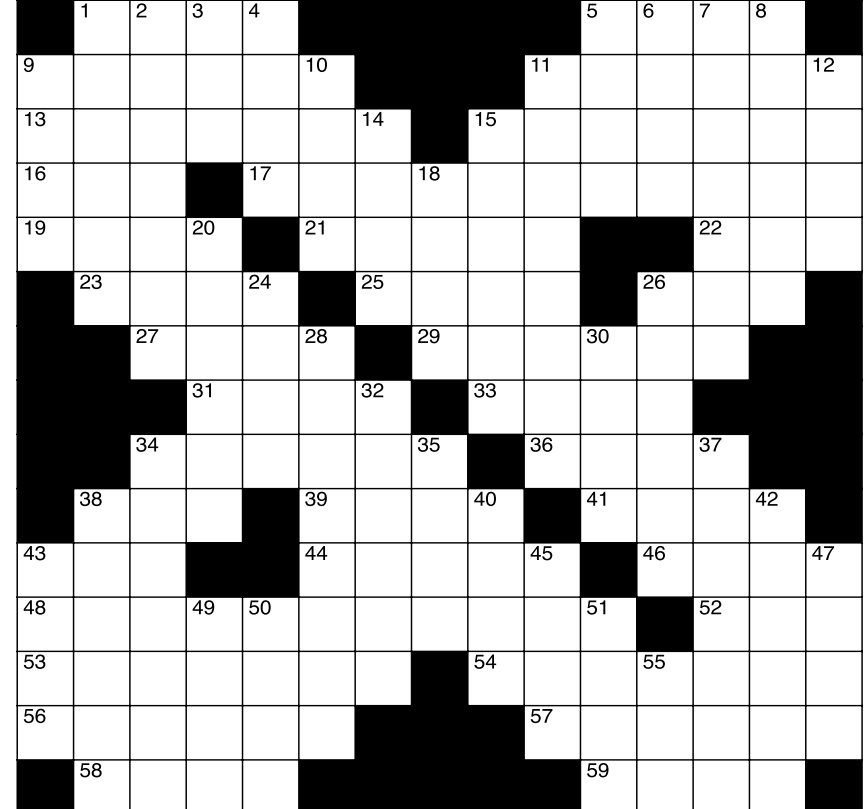
Last week, Martinsville Schools Superintendent Dr. Zeb Talley, and immediate past president of the Virginia Association of Superintendents (VASS), was among the VASS leadership who traveled to Richmond to meet with the new state superintendent Dr. Lisa Coons and her Chief of Staff Jeremy Raley. The group discussed a number of topics, including teacher licensure and school accreditation.

The leadership team also had an intro-

ductory meeting with Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares, during which they spoke about chronic absenteeism, cyber security, and mental health.

Pictured from left, are Jeremy Raley, VASS President Michael Gill, VASS Deputy Executive Director Amy Griffin, Kristy Somerville-Midgettte, Dr. Lisa Coons, Elie Bracy III, VASS Executive Director Scott Brabrand, MCPS Superintendent and VASS past president Dr. Zeb Talley

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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

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OPINION

Crab mentality

When I write a column, I'm usually pretty good at predicting what kind of criticism it will receive.

The most common complaint about my columns is that I made a crack about a very specific thing that's a sore spot for a particular reader; for example, "I was completely with you until you made that joke about someone getting trampled by an elephant; after that dark day at the circus when my grandpa lost his life and then had to be buried in a pizza box, I'll have you know that there's NOTHING FUNNY about etc. etc. etc."

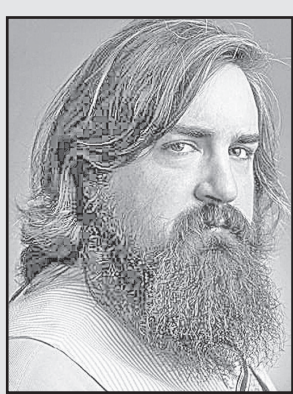
I generally try to be considerate of such matters, but at a certain point, the only thing I have left to write about is that ice cream is nice on a hot day, and even then, someone will probably complain that I'm lactose intoler-

ant, so there's not much point in trying.

Sometimes, however, complaints catch me off guard.

My last column was an open letter to Wendy's in which I talked about how my recent order was wrong and also cost nearly \$25; if fast food restaurants are going to hike their prices to the point of absurdity, I argued, they should also pay their staff enough to care that I get my order right. As the saying goes, minimum wage equals minimum effort.

One reader commented that I was a hypocrite because I routinely rail against the wealthy elites yet I also have enough money to buy a cheeseburger at Wendy's. That struck me as a pretty buck wild argument, but I did confess to ordering the Dave's Double like some



By Ben R. Williams

debauched Roman emperor, so I guess I had it coming.

Another complaint, however, struck a chord with me.

One reader complained that Wendy's employees shouldn't be making \$20 an hour because there are nurses making \$20 an hour.

This is an argument I hear pretty often, particularly when it comes to raising the minimum wage to \$15. Of course, the battle for a \$15 minimum wage has been

going on for so long that \$15 is now too low; had minimum wage increased in line with productivity and inflation, it would be somewhere around \$26 an hour now.

I'm reminded of a phenomenon called "crab mentality." According to anecdotal evidence, if you put a bunch of crabs in a bucket, they'll all try to crawl out. Whenever one crab is able to work its way to the rim of the bucket and get a taste of freedom, the other crabs will drag it back down in their own efforts to escape.

Humans may be significantly more advanced and substantially less delicious, but we're wired the same way as crabs. When we see someone else succeeding faster than we are, there's an innate desire to grab them and pull them back down to our level.

When it comes to wages, we need less crab mentality in the world; we need to replace it with blackjack mentality.

One of the biggest rookie mistakes in blackjack is paying attention to what the other players are doing; there are very few situations where the other players will affect your strategy. In blackjack, you're not playing against the other players, you're playing against the house.

I absolutely think that fast food employees should be making \$20 an hour at least; again, that's still below where the minimum wage ought to be. But I also think a nurse should be making more than a fast food employee. Preparing my cheeseburger is a noble and important pursuit, but if someone is stabbing a needle into me, the stakes are somewhat higher.

But where, you ask, will all this money come from?

Normally I would say it should come from taxing billionaires, but I insist on only buying name-brand sour cream, so I guess it would be hypocritical for me to suggest that.

Williams leads candidates in funding

Taylor Boyd
Staff writer

Del. Wren Williams is among the top 20 Virginia House of Delegates candidates who received campaign funds for the Nov. 7 election.

Williams, R-Stuart, is ranked 16 according to the Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP) website. In the Republican Party he is ranked sixth, only \$1,663 behind the candidate ranked fifth.

Del. Marie March, R-Floyd, his opponent in the June primary for the newly drawn 47th

District, is not ranked within the top 100.

According to the VPAP website, as of March 31, Williams has raised \$76,787 from 113 different people or organizations. As of Jan. 1, he had a starting balance of \$21,755.

Seventy-three of Williams' donors gave cash contributions of more than \$100, and 40 gave cash contributions of \$100 or less.

The largest contribution came from the VA Hospital & Healthcare Association for a total of \$16,000. Williams received donations

of \$5,000 from five donors including Sheree Nickelston, Warren Lee Williams, and Buddy E. Williams.

A donation of \$1,500 was given by the VA Auto Dealers Association, the Southern VA Legal PLLC gave a donation of \$250, and Angels Above Design LLC contributed \$45.

Clayton Kendrick, chairman of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors and of the Mayo River District, gave a donation of \$250, and Clyde DeLoach, fellow supervisor of the Blue

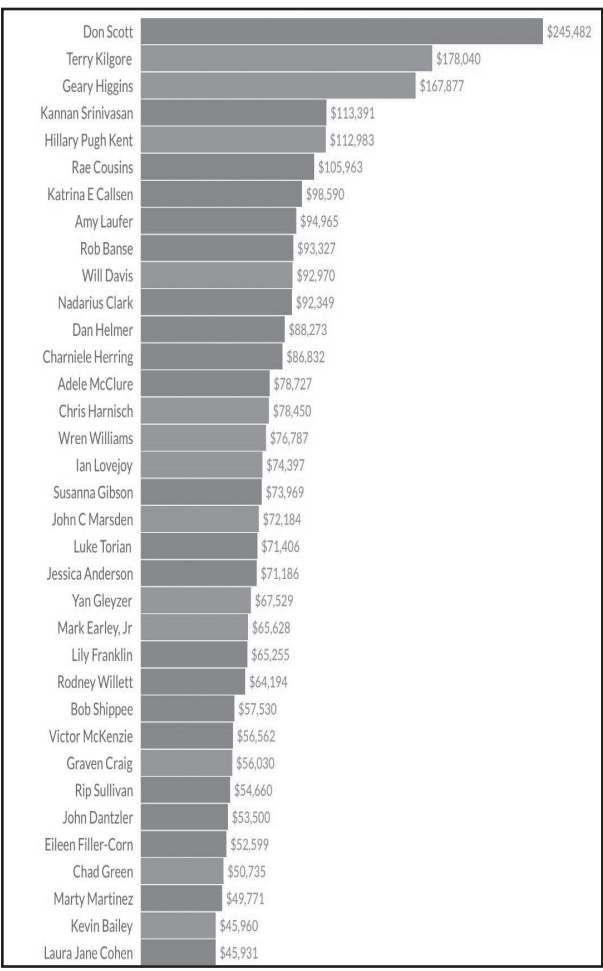
Ridge District, donated \$25 to Williams.

March received \$3,847 from 49 different donors. She received seven donations of cash contributions of more than \$100 and 41 donations of cash contributions of \$100 or less.

March's largest donation is \$1,000 from the Appalachian Power Company.

Patty Quesenberry, D-Floyd, the Democratic candidate, has reported no contributions received.

For more information, go to www.vpap.org.



According to the Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP) website, Del. Wren Williams, R-Stuart is ranked 16 among the Virginia House of Delegates candidates who received campaign funds for the Nov. 7 election.

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HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

henrycountyenterprise.com

Weekly Publication

Published Each Saturday

Michael Showell, Publisher

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

Randy Thompson, Advertising Manager
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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
COUNTY OF HENRY, VA
PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO FY23 BUDGET

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 15.2-2507, Code of Virginia, that the Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing during its regular meeting on Tuesday, May 23, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of receiving comments on the proposed amendment to the Henry County FY2022-23 Budget as necessary to appropriate funds of \$18,875,216 received from the Commonwealth of Virginia as reimbursement for construction of the Adult Detention Center. The funds will be used toward paying off the Series 2019B Bonds used for constructing the ADC. The appropriation exceeds 1% of the total County budget. The proposed budget amendment does not constitute an obligation on the part of the Board of Supervisors to appropriate funds for any items or purpose. For more information, contact the County Administrator's Office at 276-634-4601.

COUNTY OF HENRY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings has been scheduled for **May 24, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. The purpose of these public hearings is to receive citizen input into the possible issuance of Special Use Permits for the following cases.

Case S-23-06 Meghan Smith Minter
A request for a Special Use Permit was received under Section 21-602 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the establishment of a Class B Home Occupation. The specific business will be a hair salon. The property is located at 80 John Redd Blvd., in the Collinsville District, and is zoned Suburban Residential District S-R, as shown on Tax Map 29.4(19)/68A.

Case S-23-07 Ernest L. Carter Jr. and Jeanette Carter
A request for a Special Use Permit has been received under Section 21-302 of the 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 1194 Windy Ridge Rd, in the Reed Creek District and shown on Tax Map 8.7/2. The property is zoned Agricultural District A-1.

Case S-23-08 US Cellular / John Wallace, Agent
A request for a Special Use Permit has been received under Section 21-1106, 21-111 and 21-112 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of a 250' self-supporting communication tower (with an additional 4' lightning rod) instead of the maximum allowed height of 199'. At the 250' height, the FAA requires the tower to have certain lighting. This also requires approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals. The proposed tower will be located on the north side of Clover Road, approximately 0.6-mile east of Industrial Park Drive. The property is in the Ridgeway District, shown on Tax Map 52.8/27, and is zoned Industrial District I-1.

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

Letters to the Editor Guidelines

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

Weekly Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims Trend Up

The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) announced the number of initial claims rose in the latest filing week to 2,734, their highest level since August of 2022 but still at the low, pre-Pandemic volumes of 2019.

For the filing week ending April 29, the figure for seasonally unadjusted initial claims in Virginia was 2,734, which was an increase of 896 claimants from the previous week. Over half of initial claims with a self-reported industry were from manufacturing, administrative and support and waste management, professional, scientific, and technical services, and health care and social assistance. Continued weeks claimed totaled 12,390, which was little changed from the previous week but an increase of 71% from the 7,253 continued claims from the comparable week last year.

Eligibility for benefits is determined on a weekly basis, and so not all weekly claims filed result in a benefit payment. This is because the initial claims numbers represent claim applications; claims are then reviewed for eligibility and

legitimacy.

In the week ending April 29, the advance U.S. figure for seasonally adjusted[1] initial claims was 242,000, an increase of 13,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised down by 1,000 from 230,000 to 229,000. The advance number of actual initial claims under state programs, unadjusted, totaled 219,619 in the week ending April 29, a decrease of 5,518 (or -2.5 percent) from the previous week. There were 196,422 initial claims in the comparable week in 2022. Looking at preliminary data, most U.S. states reported decreases on a seasonally unadjusted basis. New York's preliminary weekly change (-9,358) was the largest decrease. Illinois's weekly change (-2,654) was the second largest decrease. Georgia's preliminary weekly change (-1,484) was the third largest decrease. New Jersey's weekly change (-1,039) was the fourth largest decrease. Virginia's preliminary weekly change (+1,021) was the fourth largest increase.

Report finds U.S. food and ag sectors' impact exceeds pre-pandemic levels

A boost in jobs, wages, exports and tax revenues shows the robust growth and enduring impact of U.S. food and agriculture sectors.

A recently released Feeding the Economy report revealed food and agriculture industries and their suppliers contribute over \$8.6 trillion to the U.S. economy—nearly one-fifth of total national output and a 22% increase since a 2019 report.

The report said total food and agriculture jobs are up 1.5% since 2019. Total wages are up 26.2%, tax revenues rose 3.8% and exports jumped 24.4%.

The economic impact study was commissioned by 25 food and agriculture groups, including American Farm Bureau Federation.

Tony Banks, senior assistant director of Virginia Farm Bureau Federation agriculture, development and innovation, said the data also underscores the agriculture industry's resilience amid

global and domestic crises, including the commodity shock following the war in Ukraine and continued supply chain disruptions.

"The report reinforces that agriculture is evolving and innovating to meet the demands of the 21st century," Banks said.

All 50 states displayed increased economic output compared to the 2019 report, largely reflecting a rebound in national economic activity. The largest gains in total output were from Hawaii, North Dakota, New York, Nevada and Florida.

This upward trend is reflected in Virginia as well.

A 2021 study by The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia provided a comprehensive representation of the contributions that agriculture and forestry industries contribute to the commonwealth's economy. It showed the impact of those industries has grown since

2017, with a statewide economic impact over \$105 billion in 2021, compared to \$98.2 billion in 2016.

"Like many industries, Virginia's agriculture and forestry sectors were profoundly impacted by the pandemic," said Matthew Lohr, Virginia secretary of agriculture and forestry. "However, both sectors have recovered lost ground and forged ahead to support Virginia's overall economy."

Agricultural producers are making gains with less land and fewer inputs, he added. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, between 1948 and 2019, land use for agriculture decreased by 28% while land productivity nearly quadrupled, and labor productivity grew more than 10 times. Agriculture's total factor productivity growth rate is among the highest of U.S. sectors.

The latest report can be found at [FeedingTheEconomy.com](https://www.feedingtheeconomy.com).

Timeline of Virginia's Clean Car law, and what to expect

People who own electric vehicles often try to help other drivers understand the investment, and benefits.

EV owner Jess Wooten is no exception. Wooten is on his second Tesla Model 3.

"I definitely wanted to be more sustainable with my purchases and I felt that getting an electric vehicle was a great investment," Wooten said.

He offered to drive a Capital News Service reporter around Richmond to detail his experience owning one.

Wooten estimated he has driven approximately 10,500 miles. "I've spent \$105 as of today," he said about his "fuel" cost.

Electric vehicle owners and industry advocates all talk about the savings. After all, the state average for a gallon of regular gas at the beginning of May was \$3.39. The national average was \$3.58 per gallon, according to AAA.

But, the entry cost to EV ownership can be high for the average consumer, even with federal and state tax credit incentives.

Regardless, EV registration is on the rise in Virginia. There were 55,823 EVs registered in the state as of March 31, according to the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

And there will be many more registered in the next 12 years, due to the state mandate that all new vehicles sold must be electric by 2035. The first checkpoint along the timeline to fulfill that mandate is 35% of all new cars and trucks sold in Virginia with a 2026 model year must be electric.

Lawmakers and citizens are worried about the obstacles along the way to complete the switch.

Virginia legislators passed the Clean Car law in 2021, which was adopted from the California standard. Virginia was the 15th state of 17 to adopt California's standards, according to the California Air Resources Board. The state applied for an Environmental Protection Agency waiver to expand standards under the federal Clean Air Act.

Transportation is the biggest contributor of air pollution in the state, according to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. State Democratic lawmakers passed the 2021 legislation along party lines when they had control of the General Assembly.

Republicans recently supported legislation to reverse the law, which takes effect next year.

Lawmakers questioned if the state and consumers are ready to support an EV-only market by 2035. Other concerns included the initial cost to purchase an electric vehicle, continued maintenance cost, if Virginia's power grid can sustain EV charging stations, and the overall impact on the automotive industry.

Going EV: Cost of ownership

Electric vehicles are usually more expensive than gas-powered cars, according to Bill Magavern, policy director for the Coalition for Clean Air in California. The average EV price is just over \$61,000, according to Kelly Blue Book data from December 2022.

Manufacturers have focused too much on production of luxury EVs, Magavern said. But they will have to market to all consumers soon, especially with the obligation to sell zero-emission cars.

Some manufacturers have already announced affordable EVs coming to the market, Magavern said.

"Ford, Volkswagen — the companies that do tend to cater to every class of buyers, they've announced plans to do that," Magavern said. "The manufacturers are getting better at learning how to make affordable cars."

The compact sedan Tesla Model 3 is currently the most affordable Tesla offering. It is often compared to the Toyota Corolla in size but the starting price is higher, even with the current EV tax credit, according to manufacturer websites.

Tesla promised a newer entry level model is on the way, and also to reduce EV assembly costs by half, AP news reported.

The five-passenger, hatchback Chevy Bolt starts at \$26,500 and is eligible for a tax credit, according to Car and Driver.

Electric vehicles are cheaper than gas-powered cars

when consumers take into account the maintenance costs and gas money to power them, according to Magavern.

EV owners and advocates tout the entry level price as comparable to other vehicles, but most lower priced EVs are smaller in size, according to a survey of auto manufacturer websites.

Charging up: Virginia's power grid

Electric vehicle drivers generally spend the equivalent of \$1 per gallon for a complete charge, according to Kate Staples, director of electrification for Dominion Energy.

An EV owner would use about 10 kilowatt hours to charge an electric vehicle, or an estimated monthly 300 kilowatt hours, according to Staples. Drivers would see about a 30% increase in an electric bill, according to Staples.

"While your electric bill might go up, you're certainly going to be saving in your pocketbook from not having to go to the gas station," Staples said.

Dominion Energy is the state's largest public electric utility. Virginia's electrical grid is currently powered by nuclear, natural gas, renewable energy and some coal and oil, Staples said.

The future grid in 2035 will be able to sustain the demand of more electric vehicles on the road and support the Clean Car law, Staples said.

Dominion is required to regularly file plans every few years on how it will meet Virginia's power needs in the next 15 to 30 years, Staples said.

"As the needs of our customers grow, we will be planning the grid to serve them," Staples said.

Dominion Energy is moving toward cleaner cars and a cleaner power grid, regardless of whether or not the law is implemented, Staples said. Dominion aims, in part, to help meet that goal through the Coastal Offshore Wind Project.

Going the distance: How to 'fuel' up

An EV can drive 150 to 400 miles on average before it needs to be recharged, according to the Department of Energy, although many drivers plug in daily.

There are three different types of chargers:

- Level 1 charging: provides 5 miles of distance per one hour charge

- Level 2 charging: provides 25 miles of distance per one hour charge

- Level 3, or DC fast charging: charges in approximately 30 minutes for a 100 to 200-plus mile trip

"I actually find that it can be a very pleasant way to take a trip," Magavern said, when drivers plan accordingly. "You do a lot of charging while you're eating lunch, for example."

Virginia continues to roll out more EV chargers across the state, according to Trip Pollard, senior attorney for the Southern Environmental Law Center.

Fast chargers will eventually be within 30 miles of 90% of Virginians, Pollard said.

Virginia received incremental federal funding for charging infrastructure that will ultimately exceed \$100 million, according to Pollard. The state will receive more funding from the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, or NEVI program.

"That's probably the most significant thing that's happening right now in Virginia to prepare us," Pollard said.

Private businesses such as Tesla and Plug In America have already installed charging stations across the state, Pollard said. There are currently 1,142 public charging stations in Virginia, according to the Department of Energy's fueling locator.

The General Assembly passed legislation in 2018 and 2019 to expand charging infrastructure. Failed lawmaker efforts in the recent session would have empowered localities to require charging stations as part of new, larger developments.

"The entire market is shifting toward more electric vehicles," Pollard said.

Building the fleet: Manufacturer response

Many major auto manufacturers have promised that 40% to 50% of sales will be electric by 2030. Honda

hopes to expand to 100% EV sales by 2040.

General Motors plans to offer a full suite of electric vehicles, including affordable, luxury and trucks, according to Matt Ybarra, GM senior manager for public policy communications.

"GM has laid out its plan to be carbon neutral by 2040 in global products and operations, and plans to eliminate tailpipe emissions from new light-duty vehicles in leading markets by 2035," Ybarra stated in email.

About 80% of the assembly process for electric vehicles is similar to gas-powered vehicle production, due to investment in production plants, Ybarra stated.

Seventeen car manufacturers have promised to go electric, some within five years, according to Consumer Reports.

Gas-powered vehicles will still cruise Virginia roads after 2035, but all new sales will cease. Some lawmakers are concerned that residents will look to surrounding states and drive revenue out of Virginia.

Adopting the playbook: What California is doing

California has taken many steps to prepare for the Clean Car standard, Magavern said.

The state currently receives federal tax incentives toward EV purchases. This helps lower the upfront costs associated with electric vehicles, Magavern said. California incentivizes automakers to manufacture electric cars that cost less than \$20,275 but only for model years between 2026 through 2028, according to the Associated Press.

Lawmakers established the Virginia Electric Vehicle Rebate Program in 2021, but have not funded the program, according to the state budget. In theory, the program would offer \$2,500 rebates for new and used electric models from select state dealers.

California utility companies also offer incentives for charging during off-peak hours. Less electricity is used to charge between midnight and 8 a.m., Magavern said.

"Then that actually helps to spread out the cost of the grid over the 24-hour period," Magavern said.

Virginia offers something similar through Dominion Energy's Off-Peak Plan but with a limited 10,000-customer capacity.

Getting to know the EV: 'Take a test drive'

Other states that implement this standard should educate residents on electric vehicles, and focus on charging infrastructure, Magavern said.

"A great way to do that is by having ride and drives, where people have the experience of driving the car and you know, they can easily be shown how to charge them," Magavern said.

On a relatively quiet test drive around a loud city, Wooten talked about why he first bought an EV. He switched to a Tesla with tax incentives and credits, Wooten said.

Incentives are a big factor to consider when making the switch. Legislators should push consumers to switch to electric cars, according to Wooten.

Manufacturers should be pushed with deadlines to offer electric options. That requirement is essential, Wooten said.

"I think not everyone will make that push on their own and sometimes some correct legislations or incentives like a tax incentive, I think that's a great way to encourage people to buy electric vehicles," Wooten said.

He encouraged drivers to just go test drive one.

"Drive any electric vehicle that you're curious about and you'll be surprised because these cars are incredibly quick, they're fun to drive, you won't believe how fast they can go," Wooten said.

Tesla steering wheels can even act as a game controller for video games like Mario Kart while parked, according to Wooten.

He shared it is one of the many reasons he enjoys his electric vehicle.

Capital News Service is a program of Virginia Commonwealth University's Robertson School of Media and Culture. Students in the program provide state government coverage for a variety of media outlets in Virginia.

ValleyStar RISE Foundation Hosting 26th annual Golf Tournament

The ValleyStar RISE Foundation is hosting its 26th annual charitable golf tournament - FORE THE KIDS on May 11, at Chatmoss Country Club in Martinsville.

Proceeds from the tournament will remain local and help support the purchase of lifesaving medical equipment at Carilion Children's Hospital in Roanoke, Virginia. Each year, the hospital treats more than 40,000 children from 40 counties in Virginia and neighboring states.

"We have been fortunate in previous years to have raised substantial funds to support children with serious medical conditions," said

Rachael Williams, president of the ValleyStar RISE Foundation. "This event has become a staple in the community, and we are excited to host another fun day of golf to benefit a great cause."

Williams attributes the success of the tournament to the generosity of our donors throughout the area and even around the country. For more information or to donate, visit valleystar.org/golf. Every contribution is sincerely appreciated and plays a meaningful role in the community and supporting the ValleyStar RISE Foundation's mission.

FDA warns some at-home COVID test kits could be contaminated



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning consumers and health care providers to stop using and throw out certain lots of recalled SD Biosensor, Inc. Pilot COVID-19 At-Home Tests, distributed by Roche Diagnostics.

The FDA has significant concerns of bacterial contamination in the Pilot COVID-19 At-Home Test liquid solution, provided in the test kit. Direct contact with the contaminated liquid solution may pose safety concerns, and the bacterial contamination could impact the performance of the test.

SD Biosensor, Inc. has initiated a recall for all impacted SD Biosensor Pilot COVID-19 At-Home Tests that were distributed by Roche Diagnostics to certain retailers in the United States.

According to the FDA, 500,000 tests were distributed to CVS and about 16,000 tests to Amazon, but the number purchased is not known. The FDA is working with Roche Diagnostics to understand how many of those tests were sold to consumers.

The FDA recommends checking to see if your SD Biosensor Pilot COVID-19 At-Home Test is included in the SD Biosensors product recall by comparing the lot number online at <https://diagnostics.roche.com/us/en/landing-pages/pilot-recall.html>.

Parents can register for K-12 Learning Acceleration Grants

The Virginia Department of Education is now accepting applications from parents for tutoring microgrants for their children through Gov. Glenn Youngkin's K-12 Learning Acceleration Grants program. Youngkin created the program to help Virginia families address the impact of the pandemic on student learning.

The \$30 million program provides \$1,500 grants to parents of school-age children for tutoring in English, mathematics, science and history, as well as foreign languages required to meet diploma requirements. Children from homes with family incomes at 300% or less of the federal poverty level may qualify for \$3,000 grants. Grants may also be used for support services such as speech language pathology and reading interventions.

"We are excited to

open the K-12 Learning Acceleration Grants application window just as school divisions are providing parents with Student Assessment Summary Reports detailing their students' academic strengths and the areas they need support to be on track with their peers," Superintendent of Public Instruction Lisa Coons said. "It is essential that parents have both the information and the support that the report and the grants provide. I encourage every parent to take advantage of free tutoring to support their child."

Available services include in-person, online and hybrid tutoring provided one-on-one and in small group or large-group settings. Parents of students with disabilities may also use up to \$750 of their awards for the purchase of assistive technologies specified in their child's Individualized Education Plan or 504

Plan.

The grant program is open to parents of any public, private, parochial or home-school student in grades K-12 residing in Virginia. The first step in the process is to visit VDOE's K-12 Learning Acceleration Grants page and create an application account for either a \$1,500 or \$3,000 grant.

Once parents are notified that their application has been accepted and approved, they will be able to log into the K-12 Learning Acceleration Grants "digital wallet" to select from a variety of vetted, pre-approved tutors.

All grant payments will be issued directly by VDOE to selected tutors and service providers with no out-of-pocket expenses to families. At least \$750 of each grant must be spent by August 15; otherwise, the remaining funds will be reallocated to other applicants.

Gaskins named new Head Women's Basketball Coach at P&HCC

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) Athletic Director and Assistant Vice-President for Student Engagement and Inclusion Brian Henderson announced Dennis Gaskins Jr. was hired as the new P&HCC Head Women's Basketball Coach.

"I want to thank Brian Henderson and all of the athletic department for the tremendous opportunity to join the Patrick & Henry PHamily," said Gaskins. "I am looking forward to bringing excitement and passion back to the women's basketball program. This excitement will only be matched by our passion for building a first-class program, where student-athletes believe in doing things the right way and to the best of their ability."

Gaskins grew up in Edward, NC and graduated from Aurora High School. He was considered a standout basketball player, which garnered him a basketball scholarship to Elon University where he was a 4-year starter.



"Patrick & Henry Community College athletics is fortunate to attract respected and successful coaches from all over," said Henderson, adding "Extraordinary coaches like Coach Gaskins tend to be extraordinary teachers and leaders for today's student-athletes. His experience as a former NCAA D-1 point guard and history as a program-builder at the high school, prep, and collegiate levels is well documented."

After graduating from Elon, Gaskins spent three seasons coaching high school basketball in Charlotte, NC. Over the next few years, he provided many opportunities for youth by founding and coaching at Carolina Explosion, a travel basketball and volleyball club located in Wake Forest, NC.

Prior to coming to Patrick & Henry, Gaskins spent one season at Louisburg College as an assistant coach for the women's basketball team. "One of my goals is to build great relationships with our student-athletes and the surrounding community," says Gaskins. "I want our student-athletes to love and have a well-rounded experience here at Patrick & Henry and I am excited to shoulder that responsibility starting this upcoming season."

Coach Gaskins currently resides in Wake Forest, NC with his wife, Tasha, and 2 children: Camryn and Kendall.

For additional information or to join the P&HCC women's basketball team, visit www.phccsports.com or contact Brian Henderson at bhenderson@patrickhenry.edu.

Dennis Gaskins Jr.

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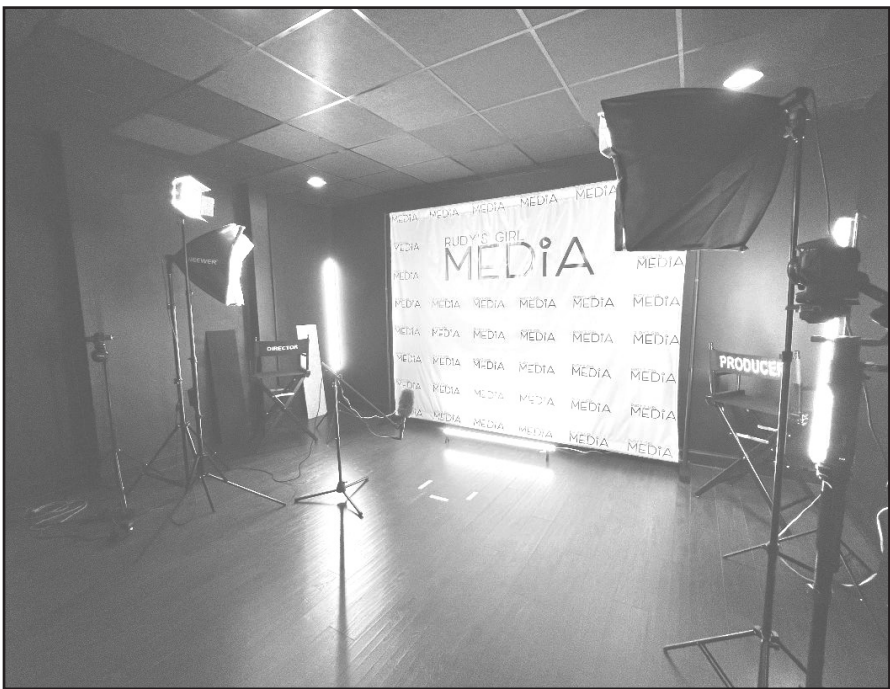
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Rudy's from page 5



Natalie Hodge hopes others are sparked to explore their creative side through film in the studio at Rudy's Girl Media.



Natalie Hodge is the founder and owner of Rudy's Girl Media.

grow their business to go through some kind of training program," she said. "It really helps you to think about your business in a different way." Hodge used the funding won from the competition to help transform

her business space. "Working with an older building, there was so much that needed to be done and I'm so appreciative of that process for all the resources and knowledge," Hodge said of the Gauntlet pro-

gram. The studio is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and other times by appointment. For more information, email info@rudysgirl.com or call (276) 207-8671.

Warner introduces legislation to make social media safer for kids

U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner joined 27 colleagues in introducing the Kids Online Safety Act, comprehensive bipartisan legislation to protect children online.

The Kids Online Safety Act provides young people and parents with the tools, safeguards, and transparency they need to protect against online harms. The bill requires social media platforms to by default enable a range of protections against addictive design and algorithmic recommendations. It also requires privacy protections, dedicated channels to report harm, and independent audits by experts and academic researchers to ensure that social media platforms are taking meaningful steps to address risks to kids.

"Experts are clear: kids and teens are growing up in a toxic and unregulated social media landscape that promotes bullying, eating disorders, and mental health struggles," said Warner, D-Alexandria. "The Kids Online Safety Act would give kids and parents the long-overdue ability to control some of the least transparent and most damaging aspects of social media, creating a safer and more humane online environment."

Reporting has shown that social media companies have proof that their platforms contribute to mental health issues in children and teens, and that young people have demonstrated a precipitous rise in mental health crises over the last decade.

Specifically, the Kids Online Safety Act would:

- Require that social media platforms provide minors with options to protect their information, disable addictive product features, and opt out of algorithmic recommendations. Platforms would be required to enable the strongest settings by default.

- Give parents new controls to help support their children and identify harmful behaviors, and provides parents and children with a dedicated channel to report harms to kids to the platform.

- Create a responsibility for social media platforms to prevent and mitigate harms to minors, such as promotion of suicide, eating disorders, substance abuse, sexual exploitation, and unlawful products for minors (e.g. gambling and alcohol).

- Require social media platforms to perform an annual independent audit that assesses the risks to minors, their compliance with this legislation, and whether the platform is taking meaningful steps to prevent those harms.

- Provide academic and public interest organizations with access to critical datasets from social media platforms to foster research regarding harms to the safety and well-being of minors.

Warner, a former tech entrepreneur, has been a vocal advocate for Big Tech accountability and building a safer online environment. He has introduced several pieces of legislation aimed at addressing these issues, including the RESTRICT Act, which would comprehensively address the ongoing threat posed by technology and social media platforms from foreign adversaries; the SAFE TECH Act, which would reform Section 230 and allow social media companies to be held accountable for enabling cyber-stalking, online harassment, and discrimination on social media platforms; and the Honest Ads Act, which would require online political advertisements to adhere to the same disclaimer requirements as TV, radio, and print ads.

2023 Summer Camps

Summer break is almost here and if you're wondering how to keep your little ones engaged and entertained, check out our list of Summer Camps happening throughout Martinsville - Henry County.

Virginia Museum of Natural History

June 12-16: Summer Adventure Camps: Nature Adventure (Ages 6-8)
 June 26-30: Summer Adventure Camps: Campology (Ages 9-11)
 July 10-14: Summer Adventure Camps: Camp Science Exploration (Ages 6-8)
 August 7-11: Summer Adventure Camps: Extreme STEAM (Ages 9-11)
 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
 Cost: \$130 per camper or \$120 for Members.
 Register online at: www.vnmh.net/education/summer-adventure-camps.

Piedmont Arts

June 5-9: Summer Art Camp Grades K-2
 June 12-16: Curtains Up! Theatre Camp Grades 3-5
 June 12-16: Summer Art Camp Grades 3-5
 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM or 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM (depending on camp selection)
 Cost: \$80 Member or \$90 Non-member. Register for both camps: \$150 Member or \$175 Non-member.
 Register online at: www.piedmontarts.org/info/summer-camps.cfm.

Spencer Penn Centre

June 12-15: SPORTS CAMP (Ages 5 & up)
 June 12: SPCA CAMP (Ages 6 to 9)
 June 13-14: ART LIKE VAN GOGH (Ages 8 & up)
 June 15: A SUMMER WALK with DRBA (Ages 6-10)
 June 19-22: LEGO MASTERPIECES (Ages 5 & up)
 June 19-20: FROM FREEDOM TO FAYETTE: OUR LOCAL AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY (Ages 10-14)
 June 22: AROUND THE WORLD (Ages 5 & up)
 June 26-29: LEARN TO SIGN (Ages 7-10)
 June 26-29: INTRO TO GUITAR AND MUSIC (Ages 8-12)
 July 10: STEM (Ages 8 & up)
 July 10: SPCA CAMP (Ages 10-12)
 July 11: NATURE PRINT (Ages 5-8)
 July 11, 18, 25: CERAMICS (Ages 8 & up)
 July 12: TEE TIME (Ages 5 & up)
 July 13: WHERE DOES YOUR FOOD COME FROM (Ages 5 & up)
 July 13: WHAT'S IN YOUR WATERSHED (Ages 8-12)
 July 17-20: LEGO MASTERPIECES (Ages 5 & up)

July 17: 3D DESIGN AND PRINTING (Ages 8 & up)
 July 19-20: ART LIKE PICASSO (Ages 8 & up)
 July 24-27: CONFIDENCE THROUGH MARTIAL ARTS (Ages 8 & up)
 July 24: FAIRY GARDENS (Ages 5 & up)
 July 26-27: KIDS IN THE KITCHEN (Ages 9 & up)

For more information on these camps, or to register, call the centre at 276.957.5757 or email spevents04@gmail.com.

Register online: docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScFT0GHOBDIOT9wC6C_to5cVIGVvd-p0G3zfZHAAMJkxmRc0A/viewform.

New College Institute

June 12-16: STEM Camp - Coding - Java Programming (7th-12th grade students)
 June 12-16: STEM Camp: Designing Passive Trash Collection System for Mulberry Creek (rising 7th, 8th, 9th graders)
 June 19-23: STEM Camp - Coding - Java Programming (7th-12th grade students)
 June 19-23: STEM Camp: BioDome Minecraft (7th-12th grade students)
 June 26-30: STEM Camp - Coding - Java Programming (7th-12th grade students)
 For more on these events, or to register online, visit <https://newcollegeinstitute.org/>.

Infinity Acres

July 10-14: All Inclusive - Animal Adventure Camp (Ages 7 - 17)
 July 17-21: All Inclusive - Animal Adventure Camp (Ages 7 - 17)
 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
 Cost: \$175
 July 24-27: Different Abilities Camp (Ages 6 - 17)
 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
 Cost: \$275
 Register at www.infinityacres.org/animal-adventure-summer-camp or by calling 276.358.2378.

Martinsville Mustangs

June 26-29: Baseball Camp (5-8 Years Old)
 July 24-27: Baseball Camp (9-13 Years Old)
 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM
 Cost: \$125 per camper.
 Register online at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeyhKPIqCz9tbV1Rq_27OtXUy0p1QvScr1Pe-qDGT0BM-9fdQ/viewform.

Dalton IDEA Center/ Fab Lab

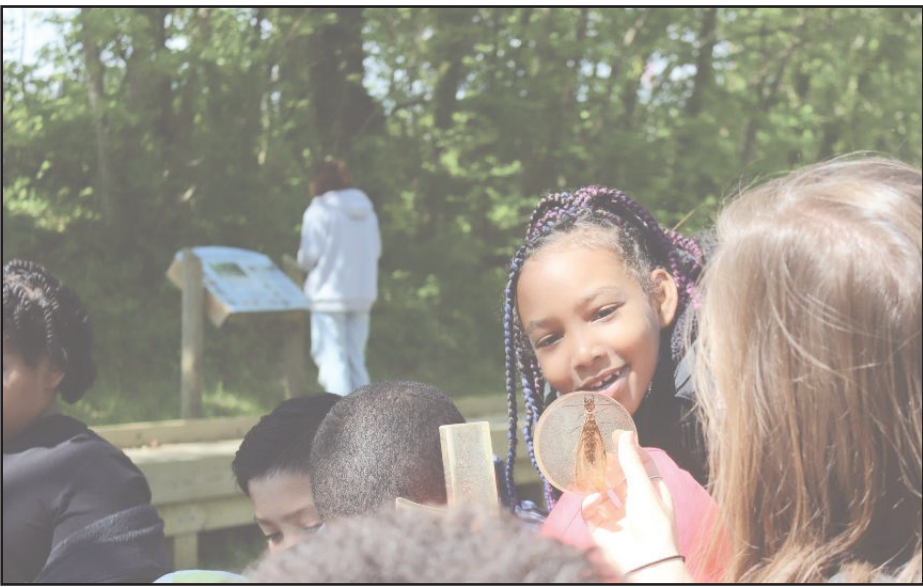


June 5-8: FAB LAB INNOVATION CAMP (Rising 6-8th graders)
 June 20-23: MINECRAFT MAKERS CAMP (Rising 6-8th graders)
 To register for our Fab Lab Innovation Camp & Minecraft Makers Camp, pre-registration required: ph.augusoft.net or 276-656-5461
 July 10-28: VERIZON INNOVATIVE LEARNING STEM ACHIEVERS PROGRAM (Rising 6-8th graders)
 To register for the Verizon program, visit: <https://bit.ly/3mrsYgD>
 Information: areed@patrickhenry.edu or 276-656-5461.

Henry County Parks & Rec

June 5: Children's Craft Class
 June 6-9: Explore Camp
 June 12-14: Tennis Camp
 June 15: Canoe Day
 June 16: Kids Fishing Day
 June 19-21: Football Camp (MVHS)
 June 20: Outdoor Scavenger Hunt
 June 21: Creek Crawl
 June 22: Stem Camp (Ages 8-12)
 June 23: Golf Camp
 July 26-28: Hiking Camp
 June 27: Kid's Geocaching Day (Ages 8 & up)
 June 28: Tie Dye Day
 July 5-7: Kids in the Kitchen (Ages 8-12)
 July 17: Into to Archery
 July 18-20: Art Camp
 July 21: Golf Camp
 July 24-25: Football Camp (BHS)
 July 25: Rocket Building (Ages 9 & up)
 For more details on these camps, visit <https://www.henrycountyva.gov/189/Parks-Recreation> or call 276-634-4640.

DRBA and city schools partner to bring kids to parks



Albert Harris Elementary second grade student Ka'Myrah Stockton watches as Dan River Basin Association Education Manager Krista Hodges showcases the macro invertebrates that inhabit the Smith River.



Callie Torres searches a patch of grass for insects during an eco-blitz activity at Philpott Lake.



Albert Harris Elementary and Martinsville High School students and teachers join DRBA staff for a photo on the bank of the Smith River just after their trout release.



Camila Lara Diaz (left) and Callie Torres (right) look at one of the brook trout they are about to release into the Smith River.

The trout population of the Smith River just grew a bit larger thanks to a partnership between Martinsville City Public Schools and the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) and a grant from the National Park Trust.

The Trout in the Classroom program has been in place in city schools since 2008 and this year's release was a huge success. DRBA staff and all of Albert Harris Elementary's second grade students gathered along the banks of the Smith River in Fieldale to release the brook trout that the students have been raising in their classroom since October. Students were able to observe the behavior of the trout once they were introduced to the water and were fascinated to see the fish change color to better match their new environment.

"Albert Harris Elementary has partnered with DRBA for the Trout in the Classroom program for more than a decade," said AHES STEM teacher Laurie Witt. "This excellent program

provides our students with the chance to engage in real-world field experiences as elementary students."

DRBA staff also showcased some of the macroinvertebrates that inhabit the Smith River, including crayfish, hellgrammites, and caddis flies, that will serve as food sources for the trout as they continue to grow outside of their classroom tank. A few brave students even touched some of the live specimens!

The day of outdoor education continued at Philpott Lake where students, with the help of Martinsville High School AP Biology students, participated in activities designed to educate them on the importance of environmental stewardship, including an ecoblitz, litter cleanup, and a lesson on the history of Philpott Dam and Philpott Lake from park ranger, Dillon Brown. Groups also did water quality testing of the Smith River to learn about the health of their local waterway.

"We are thankful for the partnership with MCPS," said Krista Hodges, DRBA's Education Outreach Manager. "This field trip allowed the students to make the connection between releasing their trout into the local cold water river and the health of the environment in their own community. By participating in a stewardship activity like the litter clean up, they were protecting the health of the young fish that they had worked so hard to care for in the classroom."

DRBA's mission is to preserve and promote the natural and cultural resources of the Dan River watershed

through recreation, education, and stewardship. DRBA provides environmental education programming to schools throughout Virginia and North Carolina.

This immersive outdoor educational experience was made possible by a grant from the National Park Trust's Kids to Parks Day School Grants Program. The grant allowed students to transform their local park and major waterway into outdoor classrooms, offering them the opportunity to connect what they have been learning in school to real-world experiences with the natural resources in their own community.



Students look on as DRBA Virginia Programs Manager Brian Williams points out the trout he has just released into the Smith River.

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