

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, October 7, 2023

(USPS-6)

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Six charged in multi-agency effort

Staff Reports

Six people were charged in a multi-jurisdictional investigation that culminated Tuesday, according to Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis, Patrick County Sheriff Dan Smith, Martinsville Police Chief Rob Fincher, and Henry County Commonwealth's Attorney Andrew Nester.

The four men gathered for a press conference at the Henry County Sheriff's Office to report progress in a multi-jurisdictional, multiple-agency investigation.

Davis said the agencies "many months ago began an investigation into the suppliers of large quantities of narcotics into our region." He added that drugs were being trafficked into both counties and the city of Martinsville.

Grand jurors in Henry County "indict-



Waylon Allen Cox-Ingram



Patricia Beth Cox-Ingram



Vincent Tanelli Ingram



Quincy Leon Penn



Anthony Joseph Albanese



Jenise Gre'Net Draper

ed multiple people for racketeering conspiracy, commonly referred to as RICO," Davis said and explained it is a "serious felony charge," as well as numerous other charges.

Earlier Tuesday, authorities from the three agencies executed multiple search warrants, including two in the City of Martinsville and eight in Henry County by the

time the press conference got underway.

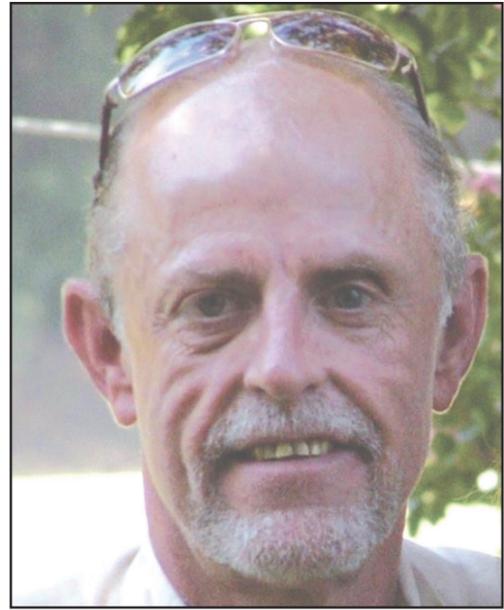
Davis said an additional three warrants were being executed in the county during the press event.

So far, he said six people were arrested and charged with racketeering conspiracy.

"Many of them are related and they are a multi-generational drug dealing family," Davis

said. "These people that we have arrested today are responsible for the death and destruction of our community members. These 'poison peddlers' have sold drugs that have destroyed our family and friends and they've profited from those who suffer with addiction, and that stops today."

See Six, page 3



Ricky Eugene Dodson

Family seeks answers in decade-old case

Staff Reports

Ten years ago, "Ricky Dodson left my mom's house in Bassett with an 'I love you Mom and I'll see you later.' Later never came," said Frances Hylton who like her mother, Polly Dodson, has been waiting 10 years for closure in the deaths of her brother, Ricky Dodson, and his girlfriend, Vicky Purdy.

Both Purdy, 53, and Dodson, 53, lived in the Bassett area of Henry County.

The two went missing on October 3, 2013.

Purdy's remains were found on Oct. 6, 2013, in her burned-out car on Philpott Road in Franklin County, near the Henry County line. Her death was ruled a homicide.

She suffered a gunshot wound to the head, according to previous reports.

Dodson's body was found about two months later, on December 5, 2013, less than a mile from where Purdy was found.

See Case, page 5

City school students help cuttings thrive



Lord Billy Bob von Mor Heim The Tree III is receiving TLC from (left to right) Jacey Pamintuan, Aliyah Hairston, and Mary Smith. The three are among a group of Martinsville City school students working on a project to grow cuttings of native black willow trees for Streamside Trees in the Classroom, an environmental education program created by the Dan River Basin Association and the Army Corps of Engineers at Philpott Lake. (See inside for additional information and photos.)

Walk to School Day observed locally



International Walk to School Day on Wednesday was a hit among Martinsville Middle School students, who walked from the Virginia Museum of Natural History to their classes. (See inside for more photos.)

Blue Ridge Airport receives funds for expansion



The runway will be extended from 1,000 feet to the west to 6,000 feet to allow more planes to land at the airport.

Taylor Boyd Staff writer

The Blue Ridge Regional Airport received \$4,718,069 in federal funding to reconfigure an existing taxiway and extend its runway. The funds are part of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) fiscal year 2023 airport improvement program (AIP) which funds airport infrastructure projects.

Before physically extending the airport's runway, airport general manager Jason Davis said part of the western part of Airport Road will have to be moved.

"The existing road is going to be too close to the runway itself, so it has to move to the north. It's in what they call the runway protection zone, so that's why that has to move over. It's an FAA safety standard that has to be met,"

he said. About 4,000 feet of road will be built to be outside the runway protection zone. The existing section of the road will be decommissioned and grassed over.

"We will take this road which belongs to the state, build them a new road, and then give it back to them," he said.

Depending on the weather, Davis estimates

See Airport, page 6

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Authorities in city seek information in Sept. 30 shooting incident

The Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center on September 30 received a call at 11:43 p.m. reporting gunshots in the area of the 1400 block of Fayette Street. When officers arrived, they encountered three people who directed them to a pickup truck that had gone over a guardrail, down a steep embankment and was upside down.

Officers proceeded down the embankment but discovered that the driver and only occupant was deceased. The three individuals who pointed out the vehicle were not involved in the incident but came upon the scene immediately after the vehicle crash.

Officers discovered evidence at the scene that verified the earlier report of gunshots, and that the pickup truck was the intended target of those gunshots.

The Martinsville Fire & EMS Department responded to the scene for the safe securing and removal of

the victim and vehicle. Because of the location of the incident, the road had to be closed off temporarily with the assistance of the Henry County Sheriff's Office and the Virginia State Police.

The victim was identified as Antoine Jermaine Preston, age 47, of Martinsville. The state medical examiner's office in Roanoke will conduct an autopsy to determine the exact cause of death.

The investigation is in its early stages as detectives are continuing to collect and process evidence.

If anyone has any information regarding this crime, they are encouraged to contact Sgt. Harley Durham at (276) 403-5330 or they can do so anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 276-63-CRIME.

More information will be released when it is available; however, no further information will be released at this time.



Casey Lynn Rogers



Amanda Heather Hill



Kathy Smith Hacker

Three charged in alleged drug-related jail incident

Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis reported that deputies were conducting rounds inside the Henry County Adult Detention Center around 5:10 a.m. on Oct. 2, when they discovered a woman who appeared to be suffering a medical emergency. The deputies immediately took action and began life-saving measures, including the administration of Naloxone. The inmate was stabilized and transported to SOVAH Health Martinsville.

A short time later, a second female inmate in the same pod also was found to be suffering a medical emergency, and deputies again took action, including the administration of Naloxone and CPR. The second inmate was also transported to SOVAH Health Martinsville, Davis said.

Investigators interviewed both women at the hospital and obtained information as to how the narcotics came into their possession. Multiple witnesses reported that another female inmate who had been in the center for seven days had been placed into the female dorm the day before, Davis said.

According to witnesses, early the next morning, that inmate allegedly retrieved a small quantity of an unknown substance from inside a body

cavity and distributed it to the two inmates, who consumed it orally and then experienced an overdose, Davis added.

He said his office worked with the Henry County Commonwealth Attorney's Office to determine the applicable criminal charges. As a result, the following were charged with felonies by prisoners, procure, sell, secrete or have in their possession any chemical compound which they have not lawfully received:

- Kathy Smith Hacker, 47, of Conway Dr., Axton;
- Amanda Heather Hill, 27, of Grace Drive., Bassett;
- Casey Lynn Rogers, 30, of Mountain View Rd., Meadows of Dan.

The Henry County Sheriff's Office uses the most modern technology and current best practices to reduce contraband from being smuggled into the detention center. However, due to the small physical size of narcotics such as Fentanyl and the use of body cavities, it can prove challenging to eradicate contraband completely.

The quick thinking and actions of the deputies were remarkable and most certainly saved the lives of these two women, the sheriff said.

Warming Center in need of volunteers

The Martinsville Henry County Warming Center needs volunteers to fill several positions, including:

- *Intake (check in guests, complete paperwork, serve meals) | 7-9 p.m.
- *Overnight Volunteers (stay at the center overnight) | 9 p.m. - 8 a.m.
- *Provide Meals (for guests) | meals should be delivered by 7 p.m.
- *Provide Transportation (pick up and drop off guests) | Between 6:30-7 p.m. and 7:30 - 8 a.m.
- *Cleaning Volunteer (sanitize and thoroughly clean the center) | Saturday at 9 a.m.
- *Laundry Volunteer



(wash linens used by guests throughout the week) | Pick up Sunday mornings. For more information, and to donate or apply to volunteer, call (276) 207-9660 or email operations@mhcwarmingcenter.org.

Globman to present history of synagogue



SUNDAY AFTERNOON LECTURE
"HISTORY OF THE OHEV ZION SYNAGOGUE"
 WITH DICKY GLOBMAN
 SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2023, 3:00 P.M.
 HISTORIC HENRY COUNTY COURTHOUSE
 1 EAST MAIN STREET, MARTINSVILLE
 FREE ADMISSION • HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE
 HERITAGE CENTER & MUSEUM OPEN AFTER EVENT

Celebrating October as Local History Month in Virginia

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will host its monthly Sunday Afternoon Lecture, "The History of the Ohev Zion Synagogue" with Dicky Globman at 3 p.m. on Sunday, October 15, in the Historic Henry County Courthouse, 1 East Main Street.

In 1927, a Jewish congregation named Ohev Zion was established in Martinsville. Forty-six Jews in five families lived in the area, and with the help of non-Jews in the community, \$15,000 was raised to build a synagogue, Ohev Zion Synagogue, at 21 Moss Street. The founders of the congregation included the Fusfeld, Heiner, Berlin, Kolodny, and Globman families. Abraham Fusfeld served as the first president. Beth Israel Synagogue in Roanoke advised Ohev Zion about acquiring prayer books and a Torah and on the

construction of the synagogue. Not surprisingly, Ohev Zion's first synagogue greatly resembled that of Beth Israel.

A graduate of Martinsville High School, Globman received an MBA from the University of Virginia and served in the U. S. Navy. He was a grandson of Abe and Masha Globman who founded Globman's Department Store in 1915. He worked for Globman's beginning in the 1970s and was its Executive Vice President and Treasurer when it closed in 1991. He is a lifelong member of Ohev Zion Synagogue and its affiliate representative to the Jewish Foundation of Greensboro.

"Our area has been blessed by the contributions of our Jewish citizens since the early 1900s, especially in the retail industry. Globman's lecture, however, will provide



a more personal look at our friends and neighbors from a religious perspective," said John Phillips, president of the Historical Society. Admission to the Sunday Afternoon Lecture series is free, made possible by corporate sponsors, Carter Bank & Trust and The Lester Group.

The Historic Henry County Courthouse is fully handicapped accessible. The Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center & Museum will be open following the presentation.

Glitzy Mermaidz officially opens



Glitzy Mermaidz, a veteran owned chic, trendy and with a touch of glam boutique, officially opened its store at 102 E Main St., Martinsville, with a Tuesday ribbon cutting. The boutique is open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Woman held with no bond in alleged shooting

A Martinsville woman is being held with no bond on charges related to an alleged shooting incident last week.

The Henry County Sheriff's Office is investigating a shooting incident that occurred on September 28. Investigators report that around 8:54 a.m., the Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center received a call about a woman shooting at a home located at 90 Autumn Crest Drive, Apartment 3 Collinsville. Responding deputies spoke to the victims, Deja Jordan and Allysia Poindexter.

Throughout their investigation, authorities learned a woman, Keriana Witcher, and Deja Jordan used to be in a romantic relationship.

Witcher allegedly went to the 90 Autumn Crest Drive home to retrieve some of her belongings. She allegedly went to the home twice and tried to gain entry. On the sec-

ond attempt, a woman allegedly kicked in the front door causing damage to it. An altercation then ensued inside the apartment between three women, according to the authorities.

Jordan and Poindexter were able to get the third woman outside of the home, where the altercation continued. Eventually, the woman returned to her vehicle, allegedly produced a firearm and fired it in Poindexter's direction before getting into a red Kia vehicle and leaving the scene.

A description of the woman and the vehicle was given to the Martinsville Police Department. A short time later, the Martinsville authorities conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle at 1502 Roundabout Road Martinsville.

Witcher, 27, of 1504 Roundabout Road, Martinsville, was taken into custody without incident.



Keriana Witcher

She is charged with breaking and entering a dwelling house; shoot, stab, etc. with the intent to maim, kill, etc., and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

Witcher is currently held in the Henry County Adult Detention Center without bond.

The investigation is ongoing, and anyone having information regarding this incident is asked to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at (276) 638-8751 or Crimestoppers at 63-CRIME (632-7463). The Crimestoppers Program offers rewards up to \$2,500 for information related to crime.

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.)

Meetings

The Martinsville-Henry County Lions Club regularly meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Pacific Bay Restaurant, 530 Commonwealth Blvd, Martinsville.

Friday, October 6

Henry County School Board will hold a Special Meeting at 9 a.m., for a School Board Retreat at Chatmoss Country Club in Martinsville.

Tuesday, October 10

Community Meeting, 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the Horsepasture Ruritan Building, with Horsepasture District Supervisor Debra Buchanan, County Administrator Dale Wagoner, Deputy County Administrator JR Powell, Sheriff Wayne Davis and Lista Hughes, resident engineer with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

Events

Friday, October 6
Bingo Fundraiser at Bassett Moose Lodge, 62 Spring Garden Lane, Bassett. Doors open at 6 p.m. Games start at 7 p.m. \$25 for 20 games plus one cover all game. Sponsored by the Martinsville Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, an organization of women educators. Proceeds will be used for scholarships for students in the Martinsville and Henry County Schools.

Saturday, October 7

Oktoberfest, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. - UPTown Martinsville

Storytime, 10 a.m. at Spencer Penn Centre. This monthly program will include special readers, crafts, and other fun activities related to Pumpkins Smile, Too! Come out and join us for this free program, fit for all ages! No registration needed.

Six

from page 1

Also, as a result of the search warrants, Davis said a large quantity of prescription pills, what is believed to be methamphetamine, fentanyl, and mushrooms, along with a "substantial amount of US currency" was seized, as were five "illegally possessed firearms, seven vehicles "used in the distribution of narcotics and there will be multiple real estate properties that will be seized," he added.

"I must thank everyone on the investigative team who put in countless hours to ensure these drug dealers were indicted, and also every law enforcement officer who came to work this morning, who selflessly executed these high-risk search warrants to ensure these people were brought to justice and no longer poison our community," Davis said.

"I assure you, this will slow the flow of narcotics into our communities," he said.

Fincher said this has been a joint effort and he is appreciative of the other agencies involved.

"Each of us realizes that our citizens deserve better than to have these horrible drugs brought into our community. Our citizens demand that we take action. Well, this is your law enforcement taking action," Fincher said.

"We have made a significant impact, but we are not done. We want to send a message to other drug deal-

ers that are out there, we're not stopping. This isn't the end. This is the beginning," Fincher said. "We're going to continue going after these illegal drug dealers. We're not going to rest until they stop."

Noting the drug problem is regional, Smith said it "is residual. It affects everybody that touches us, and we're certainly not immune in Patrick County."

As a result of Tuesday's efforts, Smith said "I am confident we're going to stop a substantial flow of narcotics coming from eastward, coming into our county."

He added that several people had been indicted in Patrick County "that are directly related to what you're seeing today. ... We have to cut the head off the snake, and I think what we've done today, you're going to see a substantial change."

Nester said his office also worked diligently to make sure the necessary paperwork was in place and thanked all of the agencies involved.

Now that the arrests

have been made, Nester said the next step is a counsel hearing. Once attorneys have been retained or appointed, cases will be scheduled "appropriately. We will then exercise the discovery process to determine whether their cases will go to trial or" otherwise disposed of.

Those charged include:

- Waylon Allen Cox-Ingram, 38, 786 Hidden Valley Dr., Martinsville, two counts distribute 100 grams of methamphetamine, endanger life of a child, and conspiracy to distribute 100 grams of methamphetamine; one count each money laundering, racketeering, distribute cocaine - 3rd offense, and conspiracy to distribute cocaine.

- Patricia Beth Cox-Ingram, 25, 425 Tanglewood Dr., Martinsville, two counts each distribute 100 grams of methamphetamine, endanger life of a child, and conspiracy to distribute 100 grams of methamphetamine; one count each money laundering, racketeering, distribute cocaine - 3rd Offense, and conspiracy to distribute

outdoor art show in Piedmont Arts' Gravely-Lester Art Garden. Face painting will be provided by the Teen Arts Council. Enjoy food from several local food trucks and live music. Admission to the festival is free.

Sunday, October 15

Deadline to submit play for One-Act Play Festival - A TheatreWorks original presentation. For questions or additional information, contact twcproduction@gmail.com.

Saturday, October 21

Race Night at Bassett Hwy 57 Cruise In, 3 to 7 p.m. at 3525 Fairystone Park Hwy., Bassett. Free and open to all racers.

Tuesday, October 24

The Bassett Historical Center will host April 1865: Danville, Martinsville, and the End of the Civil War, at 10:30 a.m., as local historian Jarred Marlowe takes a look at the last week of the Civil War and the roles that both Danville and Martinsville played in the final few days of the war. The program is free and open to the public. It will be held in the Susan L. Adkins Memorial Meeting Room.

Saturdays through 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.

ONGOING

The Bassett Ruritan Club hosts Rook Music & More on Fridays from 10 a.m. - noon. Play Rook, work puzzles, make a craft and listen to a mixture of bluegrass, country & gospel music by different bands each week. If you want, you can bring a snack to share. This event is free to the public. Any donations received will go to the Bassett Ruritan Club to pay for electricity etc.

Registration is underway for UPWARD Basketball and Cheerleading, for youngsters 5 years old through 5th grade, \$65 each at Fort Trial Baptist Church in Stanleytown. Call (276) 629.2964 or email pastordreed81@gmail.com.

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 brll.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.

Medicaid eligibility renewals have resumed. Martinsville-Henry County Coalition for Health and Wellness (MHCCHW) offers Medicaid/FAMIS application and renewal assistance for Virginia residents from birth to 64 years of age in-person: Wednesdays 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at Community Storehouse, 128 E. Church St (lower level of the old Leggett Building) in Martinsville, or by phone, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. MHCCHW's specially trained Medicaid/FAMIS Outreach Advocate is available to help. Call or text Ann Walker at (276) 732-0509 to learn more or for an appointment.

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.

cocaine.

- Vincent Tanelli Ingram, 41, 8511 Sunset Canyon Dr., Temple, Texas, money laundering and racketeering.

- Quincy Leon Penn, 47, 623 E. Church St., Martinsville, money laundering, racketeering and distribution of fentanyl.

- Jenise Gre'Net Draper, 24, 56 Prospect View Dr. Apt.8, Collinsville, money laundering and racketeering.

- Anthony Joseph Albanese, 50, 2418 Greensboro Road, Martinsville, money laundering and racketeering.

Warrants were executed Tuesday at:

- 425 Tanglewood Dr. Martinsville, Virginia

- 56 Prospect View Dr. Apt 8 Collinsville, Virginia

- 271 Chestnut Oaks Dr. Bassett, Virginia

- 363 Clyde Prillaman St. Fieldale, Virginia

- 2234 John Baker Road, Fieldale, Virginia

- 677 Frank Redd Road, Fieldale, Virginia

- 1320 Chatham Heights Road, Martinsville, Virginia

- 526 Liberty St. Martinsville, Virginia.

The investigation is ongoing, and several more search warrants and arrest warrants will be issued in the upcoming days.

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OPINION

In defense of Martinsville

I was scrolling Facebook recently when I saw a post that a friend of mine had shared. It was an essay from a fellow I've never met before, and it was about his recent trip to Martinsville. It had generated a lot of comments and shares.

"It's not going to get better," the piece opened, and I immediately knew I was about to read Hot Take #4738 about how the city of Martinsville is some kind of cesspit.

I have read this same essay over and over again. It always takes the same form: somebody grew up in Martinsville and moved away, and then they return for about two days and write a portentous dissertation on how far the city they once loved has fallen, usually describing Martinsville as some kind of unholy cross between decline era Detroit, 1970s New York City, and Hell.

One memorable example of this condescending genre was titled "Struggle and Hope in a Small Virginia Town," a photo essay published in Slate in 2014. The writer/photographer went out of his way to capture images of sad-eyed children in weed-strewn parking lots and battered American flags. If he'd also taken photos of train tracks and a stranger's shoes, he would have nailed all the major photos necessary for a college freshman's Photography 101 portfolio. Looking at the photos, I didn't even recognize

Martinsville. It was like those tabloid photos that show how ugly a major Hollywood starlet is because someone managed to snap a photo of her in sweatpants scooping up after her dog.

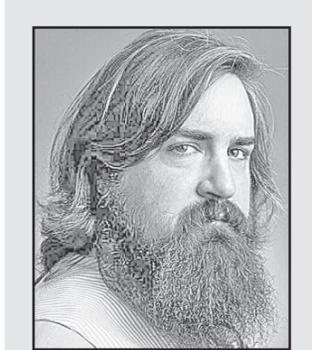
But let's get back to this gentleman's essay. He explained that he had originally written it two years ago and it was brought back to the fore when he stayed at a local bed and breakfast and couldn't sleep because of how terrible Martinsville is.

In his essay, he talks about how prosperous Martinsville used to be when he was growing up, and how he eventually saw its tragic decline shortly before he moved away. The only culture the city had was the Martinsville Speedway and high school plays. Sure, there were occasional dances or piano recitals, but there were no museums or art galleries! Driving wistfully through Martinsville those two long years ago, he saw empty storefronts. There were no men wearing hats, no women wearing skirts and carrying large handbags, and, I assume, no whale oil dispensaries or newbies shouting the latest updates on Harding's Teapot Dome scandal.

No, he said, that world is gone, replaced by a darker, angrier, more bitter one.

Speaking as an emissary of the dark angry bitter modern world, I have a couple of points I would like to make.

First off, it is either staggeringly unobservant or wildly disin-



By Ben R. Williams

genuous to say that Martinsville has no theatres, museums, or art galleries when it has the TheatreWorks Black Box, the Virginia Museum of Natural History, the Fayette Area Historical Initiative, Piedmont Arts, and Studio 107. The essay writer seems to have worse powers of observation than Helen Keller. And that's not a joke about her being deaf, blind, and mute, that's a joke about her being dead for fifty years.

What I'm about to say is an unpopular opinion, but I've worked in the city of Martinsville from 2007-2009 and again from 2012-present, and I'm here to tell you that the city (and the county) objectively gets better every year. The uptown Martinsville I remember from 2007 is very different from the one I see today, and if anyone disagrees with me, they just aren't looking close enough.

I'm not going to pretend that the city is perfect. Maybe it wasn't the best idea to enter a 40-year coal contract in the 21st century, to name a random example. But things ARE improving, and they're improv-

ing because dedicated citizens are going out every day and doing their level best to make the city a better place.

I will also say that there is ALWAYS something happening in Martinsville and Henry County. Anyone who has tried to plan an event without having it conflict with five other events can attest to this. Anyone who thinks that there's nothing to do in Martinsville isn't looking all that hard.

I realize I'm coming down pretty harshly on some dude I don't even know, but I'm sick of reading the same defeatist essay over and over again. I've been sick of it since I was a full-time journalist, going out of my way to share positive stories with the public (of which there were no shortage), only to have people constantly tell me they wished we would run a NICE story in the paper for once. We ran nice stories all the time; folks just didn't want to see them because they conflicted with the narrative they had created in their minds.

Essays like this gentleman's only serve to denigrate the hard work that the people who have stayed put in every day. I have much more sympathy for them than I have for a guy who came down from New York for two days and didn't sleep well because he heard a siren.

I was born in 1984, and as a result, I missed out on Martinsville and Henry County's boom period. I do remember the tail end of it, but by the time I was in high school, the factories were largely closing up shop and unemployment was spiraling out of control. I graduated from college in 2007 right

before the recession hit and I was fortunate to land the job at the Rives Theatre; my applications were getting rejected at gas stations because I didn't have enough gas station experience.

My generation has never known the economic prosperity that the Baby Boomer generation experienced, and frankly, I don't believe we ever will. For those who grew up in the '50s and '60s, the prosperity of the time felt like the status quo.

It wasn't. The prosperity of that era was the result of a booming post-war economy. It was never meant to last; it was undone in the '70s by the expense of the Vietnam War and increased international competition that gutted our nation's manufacturing industry. Martinsville once boasted more millionaires per capita than any other city in America, but the collapse of the city's economy was a reflection of the collapse of the country's economy. Much of that middle-class prosperity probably could have lingered into the present if supply-side economics hadn't infected our nation in the early 1980s, but it seems that once you stop taxing the super-wealthy, they don't like going back to the way things were.

There are two ways to approach that reality. You can either whine and moan about how nothing is like you remember it and men don't wear hats anymore, or you can open your eyes and appreciate what we do have and the people who work hard to lift the city.

Personally, I prefer the second option, and I find I sleep pretty well at night.

News from the 9th: Oversight Subcommittee Hearing on Maui Fires



Morgan Griffith Representative

As we approach the end of the fiscal year and approved government funding, many of us are working hard to cut spending. Because of the increased spending our nation is facing,

we've seen a \$2.3 trillion deficit this year alone, adding to the overall \$33 trillion national debt.

Republicans are still working hard trying to come up with an agreement that funds our government, secures our southern border, and reins in spending. The Democrats, however, are not willing to help. I feel this is partly philosophical, but mostly it is because they believe that the government shutdown benefits them

in the elections next year. In the meantime, Congress is in session, and we continue to work on numerous issues of concern, while the spending debate continues.

For example, recently the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which I chair, held a hearing on the devastating Maui fires that occurred this past August.

Specifically, the Committee investigated what role Maui's electric infrastructure might have played in the events leading up to the fires.

Our witnesses included the Chairman of the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission, the Chief Energy Officer of the Hawai'i State Energy Office, and the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Hawaiian Electric.

As many of you may know, in early August a series of fires broke out on the island of Maui, including one that devastated the town of Lahaina on the west coast of the island.

As of now, at least 97 lives have been tragically lost and the damage caused by the fire is estimated at nearly \$6 billion.

It seems there were many known risk factors related to Maui's electric infrastructure which contributed to the likelihood of a wildfire.

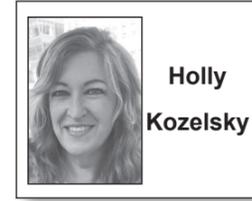
Some wildfire experts have noted that dense, flammable non-native grasses have multiplied across the island in recent years, facilitating the deadly spread of the recent fires.

Some utility law experts argued that Hawaiian Electric waited too long to pursue important upgrades to harden and modernize the electric grid against wildfire risks. The reported slowness in replacing outdated and deteriorating poles (caused by weather, bug infestation, etc.) have also played a factor.

During my questioning, I focused on the actions taken by Hawaiian Electric on the morning of August 8th.

Weather reports from the National Weather Service stated that between August 7th and 8th the region would experience enhanced wind gusts and very dry

Ever hear of wife/girlfriend season?



Holly Kozelsky

a blanket on the sofa in front of the fire drinking hot cocoa. If wishes were horses, you'd ride out the boring summer toward that sparkling destination.

But, alas – what's this?

NASCAR is not even over, but suddenly football games have to be worked around as well.

I learned that on my birthday. I was looking forward to the birthday dinner I was promised at Pickle & Ash in Stuart. It's a long drive for just any old night, but it would certainly do for a birthday. I had been having a hankering for their Ancient Grain Bowl for quite some time and allowed myself to start looking forward to it.

I was excited about that upcoming Saturday night. I figured I'd go fast through house and yard chores to start getting ready at 4:30. That should be plenty of time for a fun evening.

Saturday morning, I was asked what time I'd be ready to go to lunch.

"Lunch?" "Your birthday lunch!"

"I thought it was dinner?" I replied.

It would be a birthday lunch, I was told, in a voice full of confidence and cheer.

"I have a day full of chores," I said. "Can't we go for supper?"

A friendly apologetic tone delivered the news that there's a game tonight.

Ooooooh. I was beginning to understand.

There is football season, baseball season, basketball season.

There is turkey season, deer season and even elk season.

When is it girlfriend/wife season?

When you're new to the world of sports, being left out during sports times and having to schedule around sports games or (shudder) being brought along to a sports game can be tiring and a little discouraging, but there is light at the end of the tunnel.

In the winter through early spring, you compete with the basketball season. It seems like whenever you want to do something, your timing coincides with an important basketball.

When spring breaks, you begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Finally, basketball season will come to an end and there will be some time for you ...

But then ...

"Don't worry," you are told on a race day (during the commercials) in a loving tone with a reassuring pat on the knee. "NASCAR season ends at the start of November."

That brings on daydreams of romantic walks over colorful, crunchy leaves in the crisp or cuddling under

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10				
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- CLUES ACROSS**
- Leg shank
 - A way to recognize
 - "VeggieTales" character
 - Getting out of by cunning
 - Mythological mountain
 - Atomic #18
 - Viscous liquid
 - 2010 Denzel film
 - 12th star in a constellation
 - Made better
 - Pouches
 - Nervous twitch
 - This (Spanish)
 - Tennis legend Bjorn
 - Hand (Spanish)
 - Afrikaans
 - Int'l interpreters organization (abbr.)
 - Treated with kid gloves
 - Leaseholder
 - Frogs, toads, tree toads
 - Popular dance
 - Sailing maneuver: tack & _
 - Indicates speed of rotation (abbr.)
 - Mark
 - Health insurance
 - Custom clothing brand
 - One who makes suits
 - Execute or perform
 - Degree of pleasantness when tasting
 - Equal to roughly 5.6 bushels
 - Blood group
 - Imaginary line
 - Hopeless
 - Darken
 - Spoke
 - Work units
- CLUES DOWN**
- A way to fit out
 - Football carries
 - Force out
 - Maintaining equilibrium
 - Sealed with a kiss
 - Type of container
 - Hollywood
 - We
 - Small freshwater ducks
 - Norse personification of old age
 - Says who you are
 - Candidate
 - Sugar found in honey and sweet fruits
 - Defunct language (abbr.)
 - Take too much
 - Iranian province
 - Records electric currents
 - __ and feathers
 - Beloved Mr. T character
 - More (Spanish)
 - Beverage
 - Promotional material
 - Green vegetable
 - National capital
 - To any further extent
 - Swollen, inflamed lymph node
 - Anger
 - Pound
 - Popular Yugo
 - Salt of acetic acid
 - Millihenry
 - Israeli city __ Aviv
 - Make wider
 - Drink containing medicine
 - Acknowledging
 - Private, romantic rendezvous
 - Calvary sword
 - Disease of the lungs
 - 2001 Spielberg film
 - Fleshy, watery fruit
 - In one's chambers
 - Set of information (abbr.)
 - Dorm employee
 - Indicates position

See 9th, page 5

See more at www.henrycountyenterprise.com

Collinsville Man Pleads Guilty to Sawed-off Shotgun on Blue Ridge Parkway

A Collinsville, Virginia man pled guilty in United States District Court this week to one count of knowingly possessing an unregistered firearm, United States Attorney Christopher R. Kavanaugh has announced.

James Anthony Nolan, 28, will be sentenced on January 8, where he faces up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

According to court documents, in March 2023, a National Park Ranger saw a black Toyota Scion parked across two parking spaces at the Roanoke River Trail on the Blue Ridge Parkway. During a welfare check on the sole occupant of the vehicle, the Ranger could smell the odor of marijuana coming from the car. After Nolan admitted that he had marijuana with him, the Ranger proceeded to search the vehicle.

During the search, a backpack was discovered containing over 50 rounds

of assorted ammunition and a sawed-off shotgun in operating condition. Seven expended 12-gauge shotgun shells were also present. The firearm, which was not registered as is required by federal law, was a Derya Arms, Tradition 12-gauge shotgun with black electrical tape wrapped around the buttstock and measuring approximately 21 inches in length with a 10-inch barrel. Nolan admitted to purchasing the shotgun and sawing down the barrel but claimed it was for a project he was working on.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the National Park Service investigated the case.

Special Assistant U.S. Attorney J. Parker Gochenour, an Assistant Attorney General with the Virginia Attorney General's Major Crimes and Emerging Threats Section, prosecuted the case.

Latino Fest rescheduled

The Latino Festival was originally scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 23, but was cancelled due to inclement weather, will now be held on Saturday, November 11 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Smith River Sports Complex. Follow the official festival event page at https://www.facebook.com/events/79653772110771/?utm_campaign=20230927_&utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery to stay updated.

Stout enters guilty plea

A Bristol, Virginia man, who possessed approximately 100 firearms while conspiring to distribute methamphetamine, pled guilty last week in U.S. District Court.

Zachary Stout, 26, pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute five grams or more of methamphetamine, one count of possession with the intent to distribute five grams or more of methamphetamine, and one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

At sentencing, Stout faces a sentence of at least ten years.

According to court documents, on April 19, 2022, law enforcement executed a search warrant at the residence of Robert Hockett in Bristol, Virginia. During that search, law enforcement recovered more than 1,600 grams of nearly pure methamphetamine, 135 grams of heroin, 40 pills of fentanyl, \$28,000 in cash, firearms, ammunition, and two cellphones.

In addition, investigators learned that

Hockett was being supplied methamphetamine from Tyshawn Blackwell and Zachary Stout.

On July 27, 2023, law enforcement executed a search warrant at Stout's residence in Bristol, Virginia. During that search, authorities recovered approximately 30 grams of methamphetamine, digital scales, four cell phones, and approximately 100 firearms - many of which were loaded. Numerous high-capacity magazines and ammunition were also seized.

United States Attorney Christopher R. Kavanaugh and Craig B. Kailimai, Special Agent in Charge of the Washington Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, made the announcement.

The investigation of the case was handled by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Drug Enforcement Administration; and the Bristol, Virginia Police Department.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Whit D. Pierce is prosecuting the case for the United States.

City among localities to benefit from GO grants

The City of Martinsville and Patrick County are among the 11 localities that will receive more than \$3.7 million in Growth and Opportunity for Virginia (GO Virginia) grant awards, according to Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

The grants are earmarked for projects that are designed to empower workforce development, bolster startup ecosystems and promote economic growth. These initiatives will play a pivotal role in nurturing skilled talent, fostering entrepreneurial ventures and bridging the gap between job seekers and employment opportunities.

The announcement "underscores our unwavering commitment to stimulating economic growth and expanding opportunities across our Commonwealth," said Youngkin. "By investing in talent, bolstering entrepreneurial innova-

tion and cultivating the conditions for startup success, we are actively shaping the future of our workforce and positioning Virginia as a hub for innovation and opportunity."

Patrick County and Martinsville are among the localities in Region 3 to receive a Talent Pathways Planning Initiative Application. The Southern Virginia Partnership for Health Science Careers (SOVAPHSC) will use the \$133,000 grant to develop a plan to improve healthcare access in the region, which has been cited as a barrier to business and talent recruitment and retention.

This project will engage industry and other stakeholders, deliver a labor market analysis and evaluation of training programs, and result in the development of an action plan for developing, attracting and retaining

healthcare workers in the region.

Patrick County will also benefit from a SOVA RISE Innovation Hub Corporation that will increase business starts and expansion of scalable businesses by expanding the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region, providing ready access to capital for innovators and entrepreneurs through targeted resource navigation, technical assistance, and outreach. This project will involve the launch of the RISE Community Navigator program, expanding the RISE Entrepreneurship Training Pipeline and extending outreach storytelling.

The GO Virginia program advances regional economic growth and diversification by enabling cooperative projects that taps into workforce enhancement, cluster expansion, innovative business initiatives and site development.

9th

from page 4

conditions, issuing a High Wind Warning on the afternoon of August 7th. A Red Flag Warning was also issued, meaning that there was an even greater increased risk of fire.

During her testimony, Hawaiian Electric President and CEO Shelee Kimura stated that the company was aware of the Red Flag Warning, noting that they were aware certain areas were experiencing wind gusts of 80 miles per hour.

I asked Ms. Kimura when during the night the company learned exceptionally high winds were occurring. Even though she is the President and CEO of Hawaiian Electric, and knew she was

coming to Congress to testify under oath, she could not tell us at what time the company learned dangerous winds were hitting western Maui.

My Senior Policy Advisor, JR Walker, quickly informed me that the National Weather Service had issued the Red Flag Warning at 4:42 a.m. on August 7th. This information is important as Hawaiian Electric did not deenergize their power lines on Maui until around 7 a.m. on the 8th.

By 6:37 a.m., a brush fire was reported as dry grass had caught fire due to sparks from downed power lines. Though thought to be contained by the Maui Fire Department

around 9 a.m., the fire then flared up again around 3:30 p.m. This was the devastating fire in Lahaina that many saw on the news.

I was disappointed we could not get answers on the timeline leading up to the deenergizing of the power lines on Maui. Ms. Kimura could not even tell us how long it would take for the power lines to be safe after deenergizing.

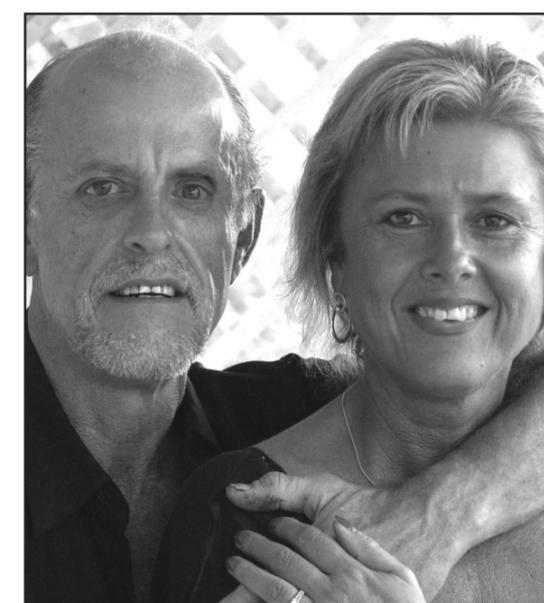
We still have more questions than answers.

Hawaiians and all Americans should know what led to the fires and how to prevent something like this from happening again in our country.

The Committee will continue to investigate in the months ahead.

Case

from page 1



Vicky Purdy and Ricky Dodson.

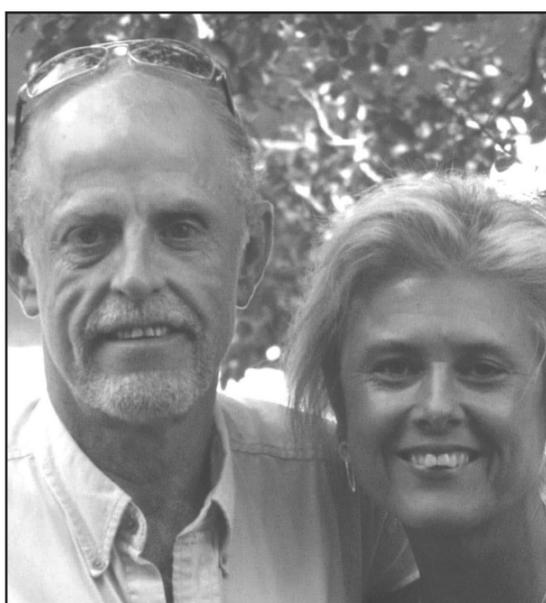
The cause of his death has not been released.

"Ten years later and neither family has any answers and there have been no arrests," Hylton said.

Dodson and Hylton's mother, Polly Dodson "has grieved, prayed for answers, and grown more depressed," Hylton said. For the last decade, "our sweet mother has suffered a hell that someone out there walking around freely has forced on her, our family as well as his girlfriend's family. For what ... drugs, money? We don't know."

In 2014, online reports indicated that Purdy had a substance abuse problem and owed money to Dodson's nephew for drugs. Based on forensics tests and cell phone records, investigators indicated both Purdy and Dodson were last seen for a potential drug deal at a home near Blackberry, according to an affidavit in the Henry County Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

A person of interest was identified, but not named. However, that person's mother reported "a strong smell of diesel" on that person a day later, according to the filing, which also noted that Purdy may have worked



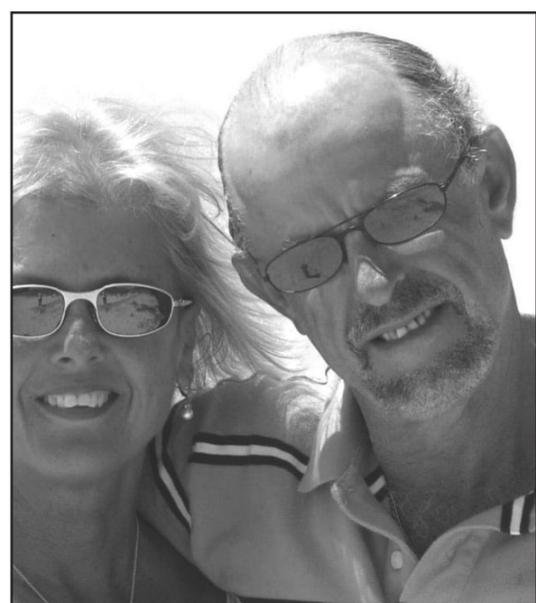
as an informant.

Hylton said the only thing the family is sure of is that "two people were murdered in rural Franklin County. She was shot in the head and burned up in her car which was found on October 6, 2013. The cause of his death hasn't been released and his body wasn't found until December 5, 2013."

Dodson's body was found "in a wooded area, where he was left for buzzards and other wildlife to feast on. Let that sink in for a moment (and) think of a family's pure hell trying to deal with that," Hylton said.

Neither Dodson nor Purdy were saints, and each faced their own demons, Hylton noted "they had families that loved them regardless. No one deserved what they got, especially the families and friends of these two people who have been forced to deal with this nightmare."

Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis said because Dodson and Purdy lived in Bassett, and their remains were found in close proximity to the Franklin County/Henry County line, local investigators assisted their



counterparts in Franklin County.

"It is a Franklin County case," Davis said. Local investigators "assisted the Franklin County Sheriff's Office since Day 1 on this case, and will always assist them when and as needed."

Franklin County authorities could not be reached for comment before our deadline, but Hylton hopes the case is still considered open and the investigation ongoing, even though she knows "nothing can change what has been done."

She is certain "the responsible parties will have their day," Hylton said. "I just pray that it happens on this side of heaven."

She and her mother issued a plea to anyone who may have information about the incident.

"Someone out there has information, and they need to bring it forward. Enough is enough. Ten years is enough," Hylton said. "If that person is you or you know them, please call the sheriff's office."

The Franklin County Sheriff's Office can be reached at (540) 483-3000.

Escaped Va. inmate suspected in Md. auto theft

The Montgomery County, Maryland Police Department is offering a reward of up to \$10,000 for information that leads to the arrest of suspects in the recent armed theft of an automobile. The department has named escaped Virginia inmate Naseem Isaiah Roulack, 21, as a suspect in the recent incident.

Montgomery County authorities said the theft occurred on Friday, September 1 in the locality.

The U.S. Marshals Service has indicated that Roulack should be considered armed and dangerous. The Marshals Service is offering a cash reward of \$5,000 for information that leads to the apprehension of Roulack, also known as Lil Nas. This brings the total reward for information leading to Roulack's arrest to \$15,000.

If you encounter Roulack, do not approach.

Anyone with information is urged to contact VADOC's fugitive line at 1-877-896-5764 and Virginia State Police by dialing #77 or 911.

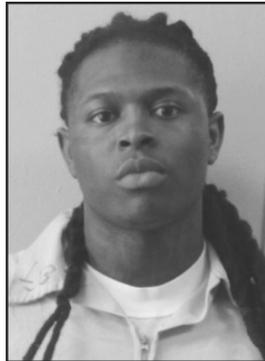
Roulack is a Black man, 5-feet, 8 inches tall, 225 pounds and has brown eyes. Roulack has four identified tattoos, including one on his chest that reads "Marie," one on his left arm that reads "RIP Ish", one on his right cheek that reads "Cut Throat" and one on his right arm that reads "Faith Is Seeing Light With Your Heart When All Your Eyes See Is Darkness."

"Bringing Roulack back into custody is our top priority at the VADOC," said VADOC Director Chadwick Dotson. "I thank our local, state and federal partner agencies for their tireless assistance in this case and urge anyone with information to contact us."

Roulack escaped from

the supervision of two VADOC security officers at Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital in Henrico County at approximately 5:50 a.m. Saturday, August 12.

Anyone with information regarding these suspects or this crime is asked to visit the Crime Solvers of Montgomery County, MD website at www.crimesolversmcmd.org and click on the "www.p3tips.com" link at the top of the page or call 1-866-411-8477. The U.S. Marshals Service can be contacted at 1-877-WANTED2, or tips can be submitted via the USMS Tips app.



Permanent Farm Use Placards Now Available at DMV

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) now offers permanent farm use placards for unregistered farm vehicles at all customer service centers. Applications for the permanent farm use placard are available on our newly redesigned website, dmv.virginia.gov.

"It is our hope that these placards will help ensure the proper use of farm use tags and, most importantly, make Virginia's roads safer," said DMV Commissioner Gerald Lackey. "There is time before enforcement begins, so we encourage farmers to send their applications through the mail at your earliest opportunity. That way you can skip the trip to your local DMV."

DMV-issued farm placards are required for unregistered farm use panel trucks, pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles beginning July 1, 2024. This requirement is a result of legislation passed by the 2023 General Assembly. The DMV-issued placards replace the unofficial farm use tags typically purchased at a local store for use on these three types of unregistered farm vehicles. Placards cost

\$15 and are good for the lifetime of the vehicle but are not transferable. An additional \$15 may be required if the owner does not already hold a title for the vehicle.

The permanent farm use placard application requires the following information:

*Name of vehicle owner and one of the following: FEIN/SSN/DMV customer number

*Vehicle year, make, model and vehicle identification number (VIN)

*Approximate farm location and acreage where the vehicle is used

*Type of agricultural commodities produced

*Signatures confirming the vehicle will only be used for purposes allowed under farm use exemption and that the vehicle is insured

Placard transactions are not available online. Please allow ample time to mail your application or schedule an appointment to bring the completed application to your local DMV. For details on which farm use plates or placards are right for your vehicle, or for more details on placards for unregistered farm vehicles, visit the DMV's website.

Airport from page 1



Jason Davis, general manager of Blue Ridge Airport.



Jason Davis, general manager of the Blue Ridge Airport in Spencer, explains expansion plans.



Airport General Manager Jason Davis said about 4,000 feet of Airport Road will have to be moved before the runway extension can begin.



The Blue Ridge Regional Airport received \$4.7 million as part of the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) fiscal year 2023 airport improvement program (AIP).

it will take at least a year to complete moving the road once construction starts. Once that is complete, the actual runway extension project will begin. The project has been in the works for about 13 years.

Davis said the runway will be extended 1,000 feet to the west to make it safer and more capable at 6,000 feet.

"With length, you have safety. We lose a lot of airplanes to out-of-state airports, particularly Greensboro," he said and explained that "big airplanes require a certain runway length for a specific condition, and when those conditions aren't met, they have to go to a longer runway. The numbers don't lie, the math doesn't lie."

It could take two years to finish the runway extension.

"Obviously the weather plays a huge role in moving dirt. So, ideally, it would take only a year, but that's being a little optimistic, but 18 months to 20-22 months" is more realistic, he said.

Davis estimates the

runway extension and moving the road will cost around \$18 to \$20 million. In addition to the \$4.7 million from the FAA, other federal and state funds will be used for the project.

"So, 98 percent of the money is coming from the grant money, which is 90 percent federal, eight percent state, and then two percent from the airport," he said.

Davis said the return on investment is there for what the airport generates in economic impact.

"It's not just throwing caution to the wind and hoping. It is a lot of money, but ultimately the return on investment will impact this community. I know that for a fact, it already is," he said.

He noted there are companies in the area that would not be here if not for the airport.

"They operate corporate jets, that's how they move from point A to point B because they can do it quicker," he said.

Davis said the airport sees around 25,000 annually. The high season is in the fall because many

visit to "look at the leaves and go to Primland when the leaves are orange."

On average, 33 airplanes use the airport each day for a total of 66 operations every day.

He added that the runway extension would not have been accomplished without the assistance of the Harvest Foundation, who front-funded the design efforts and the environmental efforts to expedite the process.

"It could not have happened without them and our Board of Directors and their efforts to try and expedite this because originally this was slated for 2031 to begin, which in FAA terms means 2033," Davis said. "So, here we are cutting the timeline almost in half by being creative and aggressive and having partners like Harvest."

Following the runway extension, a full taxiway rehabilitation and building of a new airport terminal are planned.

On airport terminals, Davis said the state looks at a 40-year life cycle for a building.

"This one was built in

'87. We're getting close to that, and it's something we want to kind of compliment the runway with, a new terminal," he said.

There also are plans for a complete rebuild of the terminal from the ground up and repurposing the current terminal, he said. The new terminal would be adjacent to the airport's new ramp and will be three times as big as the current one.

Simply Suzanne's Café will also be moved into the new terminal, and Davis said he believes the current terminal will become a leasable office space.

"We've seen other airports in Virginia accomplish that goal with their own terminal. There's one in Virginia that has repurposed it into three different companies' offices, one being a driving school," he said.

In August, the Aviation Board awarded funds to the Blue Ridge Airport, including \$17,720 for gate replacement and \$147,473 for Terminal Area Site Preparation (Environmental Coordination/Design).

Davis said the airport



Blue Ridge Regional Airport general manager Jason Davis said the runway extension project has been in the works for about 13 years.

wants to keep the building aviation-related with a potential flight school or living quarters or offices for the nearby Air Care, a medical flight team.

"So, if they're on a 24-hour shift and one of the nurses or paramedics lives three hours away and they're late one night

and then off a day and they have to be back the next day, they can just use this as some type of housing," he said.

Davis said the final project is to mill and overlay the asphalt of the west-side ramp.

"Then after that, I might have to retire," he said, chuckling.

Virginia budget puts millions toward support staff as schools struggle to find teachers

By Alyssa Hutton, Capital News Service

Virginia schools will be able to hire more support staff positions, something educators say is desperately needed amid a continued teacher shortage.

State lawmakers last month approved an amended budget that will direct \$152 million toward these school support positions. The appropriations help boost the ratio of allotted support staff per teacher. The funding ratio increased from 21 support positions per 1,000 pupils to 24 per 1,000 pupils -- though the older standard was 26 support positions, according to a July report by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission.

This funding has been capped for over a decade, following a \$3.7 billion shortfall in the Great Recession-era budget that was never adjusted. The cap reduction resulted in a \$331 million reduction in state education funding last year, according to JLARC.

Some positions limited by the cap include administrative, clerical and operations staff, as well as technology and instructional professionals, according to the Virginia Association of School Superintendents website. Many education groups say the cap has resulted in the loss of thousands of support staff, even as enrollment grew.

The state's Standards of Quality provide the foundation for public education, including minimum staffing needs. The standards typically under-calculate how much staff is actually needed, according to JLARC. Elimination of the support cap was a near-term recommendation on the report.

Virginia school divisions receive less K-12 funding per student than the national average, according to JLARC. Other states receive just under \$2,000 more per student.

Chad Stewart, the Virginia Education Association's policy analyst, said this cap was supposed to be temporary. "An entire generation of kids have gone through their

K-12 experience in the state of Virginia with far less support staff for helping their schools function and making sure that teachers weren't overwhelmed with all these additional duties, and could focus on teaching," Stewart said.

When there is an inadequate amount of support staff in schools, teachers or other support staff have to fill multiple positions, according to Stewart.

"It takes them [teachers] away from the duties they're trained to do, which is supporting students in different ways," Stewart said.

Guidance counselors in particular have fulfilled multiple support positions, such as monitoring cafeterias or clerical work in the office, according to Stewart. A law took effect July 1 to ensure counselors spend at least 80% of their time doing direct counseling of students.

Teacher Karl Knoche has worked at Virginia Beach City Public Schools since 2007. He has taught government and economics at First Colonial High School since 2014.

"All the support staff at my school does a great job of helping teachers and students, and I feel that I can go to them with any problems," Knoche stated in an email.

Knoche has extra duties such as monitoring students between classes, during lunch and before school, which can be "time consuming," he stated.

Teachers seem to have more responsibilities outside of the classroom than when he first started teaching, according to Knoche.

"We have been fortunate at my school to be fairly well staffed," Knoche stated. "We have had issues with having enough custodians, but that isn't due to the lack of jobs, but the lack of interest in the jobs."

Virginia leaders have grappled with teaching vacancies in recent years. The General Assembly committed to increasing compensation with 5% pay increases over three consecutive fiscal years starting in 2022, according

to JLARC.

However, the pay increases may not address low or no compensation in previous years, coupled with inflation the past two years, the report stated. Additionally, not every school division could fund the full 5% increases because their locality does not provide enough matching funds "for employees not recognized through the SOQ formula."

Virginia ranks No. 22 for teacher pay, which is an average salary of about \$61,000, according to the National Education Association.

The state had over 3,500 unfilled teaching positions in the 2022-23 school year. Elementary school teachers accounted for the most vacancies, followed by special education, according to data from the Virginia Department of Education. Special education positions at 5.8% had the highest percentage of unfilled positions, followed by world language and then elementary school teachers.

The VDOE announced a strategic plan in 2022 to improve teacher recruitment and retention. The goals are to make it easier for qualified teachers to be hired, consider more candidates eligible to fill open positions and reinforce strategies that maintain a thriving workplace, such as programs focused on teacher retention.

The use of appropriated funds will vary by district, but the intent is that local school divisions will use funds for support staff positions, according to a VDOE email response.

The governor and lawmakers have removed close to "three-quarters of the support positions cap" in the past two sessions, the VDOE stated.

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.

LEGAL NOTICES

American Towers LLC is proposing a 15-ft x 10-ft ground disturbance to take place inside an existing tower compound associated with the collocation of antennas at 177-ft AGL on an existing 194.7-ft (199.5-ft overall with appurtenances) AGL monopole communications tower located at 535 Horsley Road, west of a portion of Virginia Avenue, south of the census-designated place of Oak Level, in Henry County, VA; on the central portion of a 90-acre parcel of land identified Property ID: 223920001 by the Henry County Assessor's Office. The tower structure is unlit, and the tower facility will include the proposed 15-ft x 10-ft ground disturbance inside the existing tower compound, along with a 30-ft buffer surrounding the existing tower compound. American Towers LLC seeks comments from all interested persons on any potential significant impact the proposed action could have on the quality of the human environment pursuant to 47 C.F.R. Section 1.1307, including potential impacts to historic or cultural resources that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Interested persons may comment or raise concerns about the proposed action by submitting an e-mail to enviro.services@american-tower.com. Paper comments can be sent to: American Towers LLC, Attn: Environmental Compliance, 10 Presidential Way, Woburn, MA 01801. Requests or comments should be limited to environmental and historic/cultural resource impact concerns and must be received within 30-days of this notice. This invitation to comment is separate from any local planning/zoning process that may apply to this project.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

COUNTY OF HENRY, VA
PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO FY24 BUDGET

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2507, Code of Virginia, that the Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard, in the Summerlin Meeting Room on the first floor of the County Administration Building, 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 FY2023-24 Budget to appropriate a total of \$3,263,851 in grant funds received for the purchase and installation of 12 emergency generators. 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.

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. CL23000534-00
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8:01-316, -317, 20-104
HENRY CIRCUIT COURT
3160 Kings Mountain Rd., 3rd Floor, Martinsville, VA 24112

KELLY MARTIN v. JACOB PAUL VILT
ADDRESS UNKNOWN

The object of this suit is to:
OBTAIN A DIVORCE A VINCULO MATRIMONII
It is ORDERED that JACOB PAUL VILT appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before November 10, 2023.
SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

Janet A. Adams
JUDGE CLERK

COUNTY OF HENRY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings have been scheduled for **October 25, 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 Variances for the following cases.

Case V-23-04 Double Diamond Development
A request for a Variance was received under Section 21-212 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the reduction of the parking ratio from 4.4 spaces / 1,000 sq ft of gross floor area, to 3.06 spaces / 1,000 sq ft of gross floor area. The property is located at 2876 Greensboro Road in the Ridgeway District and is zoned Commercial District B-1, as shown on Tax Map 52.4(52)/4R.

Case V-23-05 John Edwards
A request for a Variance was received under Section 21-1104 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of an educational pavilion, to be located 36' from the center of the road, instead of the required 60'. The property is located at 4313 The Great Road in the Horsepasture District, is zoned Industrial District I-1, as shown on Tax Map 28.4(9)/A,B.
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

COUNTY OF HENRY REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings has been scheduled for **October 11, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following these public hearings, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the applications to the Board of Supervisors.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct public hearings on the following applications on **October 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia.

The purpose of these public hearings is to receive input into the possible rezoning of property. Following are the specifics of the public hearings.

Case R-23-15 Willie Jeff and Janet C. Evans
The property is located at 544 Valley Dr, in the Blackberry District. The Tax Map number is 39.2(7)/11F. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 5.6-acres from Rural Residential District R-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to continue to keep chickens on the property.

Case R-23-16 Kevin D. and Brenda C. Cochran
The property is located at immediately west and south of 2955 Dillons Fork Rd, in the Blackberry District. The Tax Map number is 39.2/69B. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 12.5-acres from Rural Residential District R-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to market the property to potentially be used for agricultural purposes.

Case R-23-17 Charles M., Patricia Turner and others
The property is located at 4990 Stones Dairy Rd, in the Blackberry District. The Tax Map number is 25.5/261B. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 3.42-acres from Mixed Residential District M-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to build accessory structure(s) on the property larger than what is allowed under the Mixed Residential zoning.

Case R-23-18 Leobardo Ramirez and Daisy Ramirez/El Escondite
The property is located at 34 Tower Rd, in the Reed Creek District. The Tax Map number is 16.8(22)/3E. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 1.79-acres from Industrial District I-1 to Commercial District B-1. The applicant wishes to establish a restaurant in the existing building.

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

HENRY COUNTY PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to §15.2-1427 and §58.1-3007 of the Code of Virginia, the Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard, in the Summerlin Meeting Room on the first floor of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Road in Collinsville, Virginia.

The purpose of the public hearing is to receive citizen input on a proposed change in the County's transient occupancy tax, raising the rate from two-percent to five-percent, adding a penalty clause for past due payments of the tax, and amending County Code Sec. 8-1400 to reflect the change in the rate.

A copy of the full text of the ordinance may be viewed in the County Administrator's Office on Kings Mountain Road, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

HENRY COUNTY PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-1427 of the Code of Virginia, the Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard, in the Summerlin Meeting Room on the first floor of the County Administration Building, 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 (Sec. 8.500) regarding Real Estate Tax Relief for Certain Elderly, Disabled and Handicapped Persons.

A copy of the full text of the ordinance may be viewed in the County Administrator's Office on Kings Mountain Road, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).
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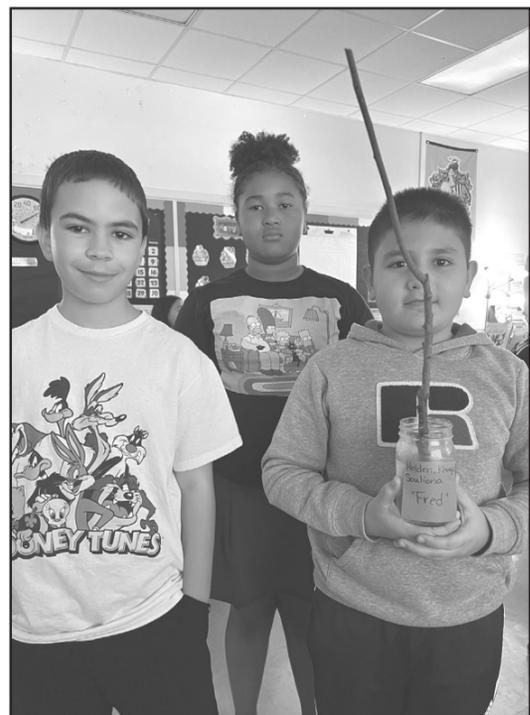
Raising 'Bob' and his cousins

Last week, elementary and high school students in Martinsville received cuttings of native black willow trees for Streamside Trees in the Classroom. The cuttings have names -- Bob, Fred, Katrina, Nova, Joe, Thick Daddy, Lord Billy bob von mor heim the tree III, and others.

Students will spend the next four weeks caring for their trees and helping them develop roots. Then, the students will plant the trees in an area

in need of streamside restoration. As they grow, these trees will help lessen pollution, keep the streams cooler during the summer, and provide needed habitat for local wildlife

Streamside Trees is an environmental education program created by the Dan River Basin Association and the Army Corps of Engineers at Philpott Lake that teaches students about water quality and the importance of streamside vegetation.



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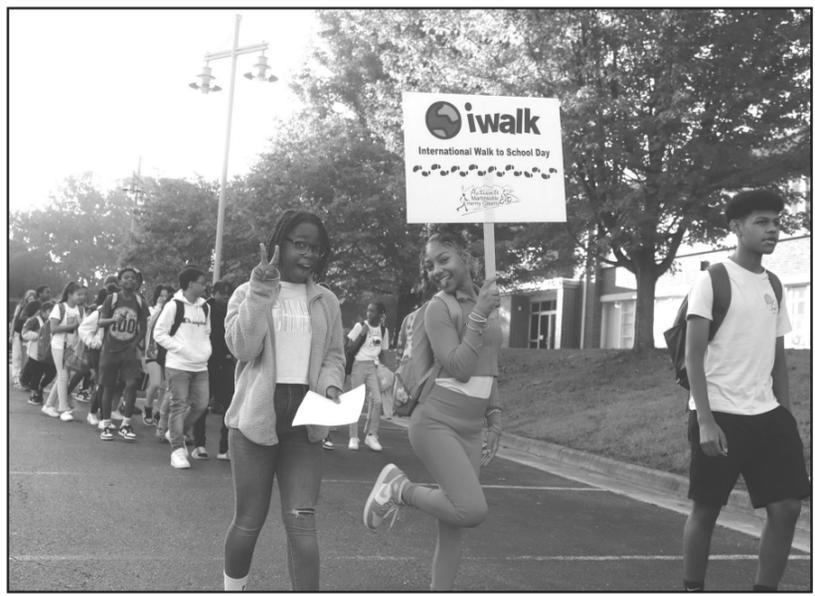
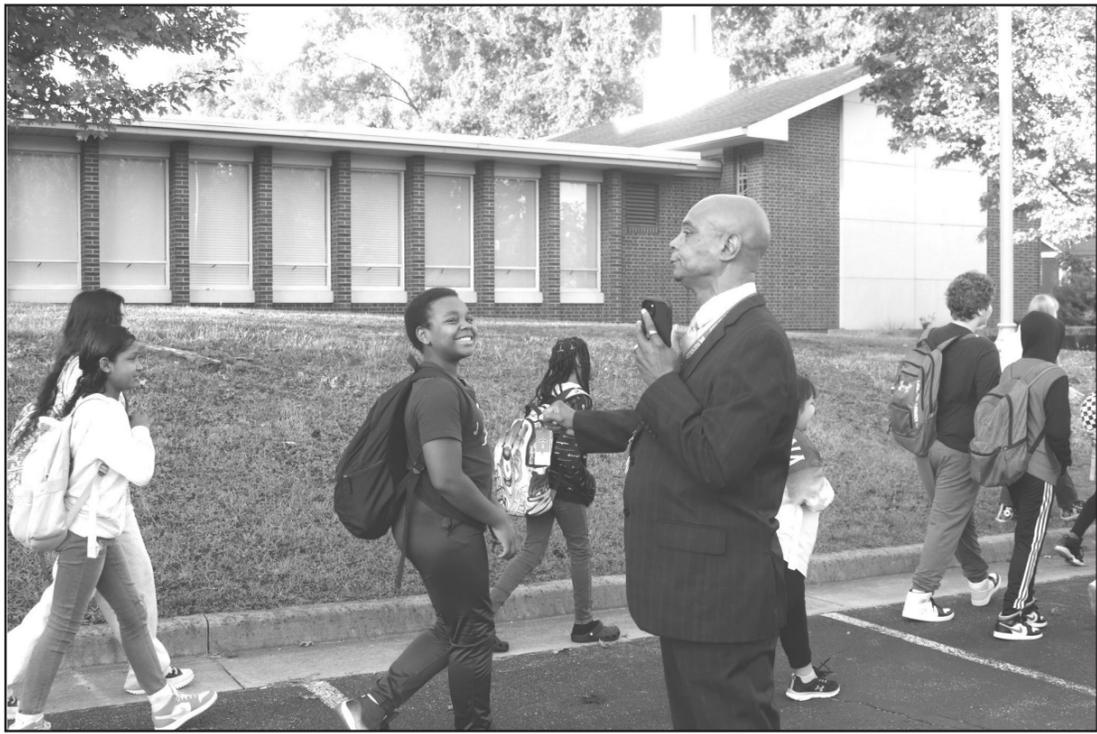
For more information, call the office at (276) 694-3101

Students celebrate International Walk to School Day

Martinsville Middle School students started off their Wednesday a little differently to celebrate International Walk to School Day. Instead of the usual drop-off, students began their day at the Virginia Museum of Natural History and walked to school on foot.

Walking together not only promotes a healthier lifestyle but also strengthens our sense of community.

Thank you to all our students, parents, law enforcement officers, bus drivers, and everyone who made this day a success!



OBITUARIES

Myrtice Wrenn Clark



On Saturday, March 25, 2023 Myrtice Wrenn Clark, age 88, passed away peacefully at her home in Indian Land, South Carolina.

Myrtice was born in Danville, Virginia on May 9, 1934 to the late Mary Virginia (Jackson) Wrenn and the late Ralph Hubert Wrenn. Raised in Danville, she graduated from George Washington High School and Stratford College.

In 1954 she married the love of her life, Jerry Clark and moved to Blacksburg where she was employed by Virginia Tech. In 1955 she moved to Martinsville, VA and was employed by the United Way as executive secretary.

In the 1960's and 1970's Myrtice was an event organizer and committee chairman for Lynwood Golf & Country Club, and a chapter president for Beta Sigma Phi service sorority. She volunteered with the Cub Scouts, Piedmont Arts and other local organizations. She was an officer and board member with the Girl Scouts of America for over 25 years; as a national delegate, state leader, local leader and mentor.

She was a member

of Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church of Martinsville, VA for over 40 years; with leadership roles in the Wesleyan Service Guild, the Kathleen Carter class, children's education, junior handbell choir and children's choir.

In 1987, Myrtice moved to Matthews, NC where she sang with the Melody Makers Community Choir and attended Matthews United Methodist Church. She served as an officer with the Melody Makers and volunteered with the Mecklenburg County Extension and Community Association. Her passions were family, service to those in need, singing in choir and fostering life-long friendships. She took great joy in planning and directing weddings.

Myrtice is survived by her husband of 68 years, Jerry E. Clark

of the home; brother Col. Hubert Earl "Bud" Wrenn (USAF retired) of Dumfries, VA, son Kenton L. Clark (Stephanie C.) of Blacksburg, VA, and daughter Jeri C. Lawrence (Barry W.) of Waxhaw, NC. She is also survived by six grandchildren; Brian V. Lawrence (Amber H.), Timothy D. Lawrence (Jacque F.), Bethany N. Lawrence, Benjamin T. Clark, Virginia L. Clark (Zachary W. Tolson) and Elizabeth C. Stroud (Caleb Z.); three great-grandchildren and extended family.

A celebration of Myrtice's life will be conducted on Saturday, October 7, 2023 at 1:00 P.M. at Wrenn-Yeatts Westover Chapel with Pastor Stan Wright officiating. Interment will follow at Danville Memorial Gardens. The family will receive friends prior to the service from 12:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M. at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Wesley UMC of Martinsville VA, Matthews (NC) UMC (Melody Makers), Girl Scouts - Virginia Skyline Council or Hospice & Palliative Care - Charlotte (NC) Region.

Barbara McGuire Harris



Barbara McGuire Harris, 82, of Axton Va. passed away Friday, September 29, 2023. She was born in Martinsville, Va. on April 27, 1941 to Roy Lee McGuire and Virginia Hairfield McGuire.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Lionel Douglas Harris; son, Edward Lee Harris; sisters, Doris Herndon and Nancy Robertson. She is survived by her son, Wayne Harris (Lori); grandsons, Aaron Harris (Adrienne) and Josh Harris (Dana); granddaughters, Chelsea Rakes (Micah) and Jillie Wilkins; great grandsons, Kaiden Harris, Colin Harris, and Oliver

Harris; sister, Vera Haley; brother, James McGuire; brother-in-law, Dudley Herndon; and many beloved nieces, nephews and cousins.

After retiring from Tultex Corporation in 1998, Barbara and her husband owned and operated Harris Restaurant in Axton, Va. She later worked as a cook at Clarence's Steakhouse.

Barbara was a lifelong

member of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church and she loved her church family.

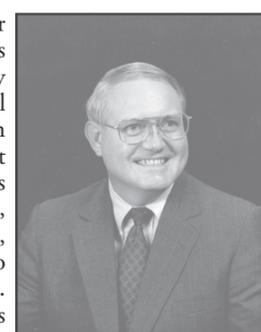
A visitation will be held from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm on Sunday, October 8, 2023 at Mount Vernon Baptist Church. A funeral service will be held at the church at 2:00 pm on Monday, October 9, 2023 and will be officiated by Pastors George Agnew and Robbie Benfield.

Memorials may be made to Mount Vernon Baptist Church, 7174 Mountain Valley Road, Axton, Va. 24054.

McKee-Stone Funeral Home, Martinsville, Va. is serving the family.

To express condolences online, please visit www.collinsmckee-stonemartinsville.com.

Thomas Elmo Hall



Thomas Elmo Hall or "Tommy" to his friends and family, passed away at Forsyth Hospital in Winston Salem September 29, 2023 at the age of 78. He was born on August 3, 1945, in Huntington, West Virginia, to Elmo and Virginia Hall. He is survived by his sister, Nancy Kerrigan Rudquist.

Tommy's legacy lives on through his family, including his devoted wife, Betty Allen Hall. He was a dedicated father to his children, Thomas Korber Hall (Kory) and Nancy Kerrigan Hill (Kerri), and grandson, Thomas Lewis Hall.

Tommy was a Martinsville High School Bulldog. He played varsity football and graduated in 1964. He pursued his studies at Clemson University, earning a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Management. During his time at Clemson, Tommy's commitment extended to the ROTC, which led to his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army upon his graduation in 1968.

Tommy Hall served his country with honor and distinction during the Vietnam War, primarily stationed in Korea. His remarkable leadership and sense of duty were evident as he was entrusted with the responsibility of commanding a facility that stored radioactive materials. Later, he continued his service in Fairbanks, Alaska, before being honorably discharged from active duty in 1972. His commitment to the military endured for over three decades in the US Army Reserves, where he achieved the rank of Lt. Colonel.

One of Tommy's proudest roles was that

of a single parent to Kory and Kerri. He provided them with a loving and nurturing environment, shaping them into the remarkable individuals they are today. Tommy was not only their father but also their mentor, instilling values that will continue to guide them throughout their lives.

Tommy had a special bond with his mother, Virginia, affectionately known as Mee Maw, and his sister, Nancy. They were an integral part of his life, providing unwavering support and love.

Tommy's influence extended to the extracurricular activities of his children, encouraging Kory in the Boy Scouts of America and supporting Kerri's interests for dancing and concert band. He took great pride in their achievements.

In his 26 years of marriage to Betty Allen, Tommy was a loving husband. He was also a devoted stepfather to Brian Scott Turner (Scott) and Lauren Elizabeth Turner (Lauren). Together, they created cherished memories while exploring places like Ireland, Mexico, and Colorado.

Tommy was a man of many talents, skilled in plumbing, electrical work, and carpentry. He had a passion for projects around the house, from refinishing floors to building bathrooms. At the time of his passing, he was eagerly setting

up a vast model train room, a testament to his creativity and ingenuity. He was an avid reader with a curious mind.

One of Tommy's prized possessions was his first car, a blue 1951 Ford, which he initially purchased for \$50. This vehicle held sentimental value and represented his enduring connection to his past.

Throughout his life, Tommy forged lifelong friendships, including those with Ken Wilson and Eddie Gravelly. He had the privilege of attending a Clemson football game with his dorm mate Ed White in 2022, a cherished memory that brought him great joy.

In his final year, declining health led Tommy in and out of hospitals and nursing facilities. However, he was never alone; he was continuously surrounded by loved ones who provided unwavering support and comfort.

Thomas Elmo Hall, Tommy, leaves behind a legacy of love, dedication, and an indomitable spirit. He will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

A memorial service to celebrate Tommy's life was held at McKee's Funeral Home on Wednesday October 4. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made in his memory to the Wounded Warriors Project at www.woundedwarriorproject.org.

Tommy's memory will forever live on in the hearts of those he touched. May he rest in peace.

McKee-Stone Funeral Home, Martinsville, Va. is serving the family.

To express condolences online, please visit www.collinsmckee-stonemartinsville.com.

Helen Knott



Helen Knott, 98 ½ years of age, of Martinsville, Va. passed away Friday, September 29, 2023. Helen was born on April 23, 1925 in Francisco, N.C. to the late Fletcher Morris Smith and Carrie Ward Smith.

In addition to her parents, Helen was preceded in death by her husband of 66 ½ years, Jack Knott; her son, Paul Knott and his late wife, Lisa Knott; sisters, Cornelia Thurman, Lois Hill, Mildred Robertson, Margaret Flippen, Dorlee Barnett and brother, Jack Smith.

She is survived by her sons Wayne Knott and Allen Knott of Martinsville; granddaughters, Keri Knott & Ashley

Eanes; and grandson Kevin Marlin.

Helen was a longstanding member of Kearfott Memorial Baptist Church. During WWII Helen worked at Pannill Knitting Company. Afterwards she went to work at Dupont but later left there and went to work for Lacy Knitting Company, which allowed her to be away from work during the summertime so she

could be at home to raise her sons.

A visitation was held on Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at Kearfott Memorial Baptist Church. A funeral service followed and was officiated by Reverend Dr. J.D. Harmon. Interment was in Roselawn Burial Park.

In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to Kearfott Memorial Baptist Church, 1403 Rivermont Heights, Martinsville, VA 24112.

McKee-Stone Funeral Home, Martinsville, Va. is serving the family.

To express condolences online, please visit www.collinsmckee-stonemartinsville.com.

Terry Wright



It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Terry Wright, a beloved father, brother, son, and friend, who departed from this world on September 29, 2023, at the age of 62. Terry's journey began on October 10, 1960 in Martinsville, Virginia, born to Charlie Cecil Wright, Sr. and Ruby Geraldine Wright, and he filled his life with an indomitable spirit and a zest for adventure.

Terry valued hard work, honesty, and the value of a man's word. He was a man of many passions, but none ignited his soul quite like riding his motorcycle. From the roar of the engine to the wind in his hair, the open road was where he found his truest freedom. Whether he was cruising along winding highways or exploring remote

roads, Terry's love for the open road was a reflection of his adventurous spirit.

Terry was preceded in death by his father; brother, Michael Wright; and sister, Renae Wright.

Terry leaves behind his children, Amber Drawbaugh and Ashley Wright; granddaughters Eleanor Drawbaugh; mother, Geraldine Wright; brother, Charlie Wright; and sister, Debra Wright, as well as a wide circle of friends and extended family who will forever carry his memory in their

hearts. His passing leaves a void that can never be filled, but his spirit lives on in the memories we shared and the love he bestowed upon us all.

A visitation was held on Monday, October 2, 2023 at McKee-Stone Funeral Home. A private interment was held at the Wright Family Cemetery on October 3, 2023.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Saint Jude Children's Research Hospital, P.O. Box 1000, Dept. 142, Memphis Tenn. 38105.

Rest in peace, Terry, as you ride on to new horizons in the heavens above. You will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing you.

McKee-Stone Funeral Home, Martinsville, Va. is serving the family.

Federal funds to bolster drug court

The U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) awarded \$1 million to the Piedmont Regional Community Services Board, which serves the counties of Franklin, Patrick, and Henry, and the City of Martinsville, for the enhancement of its adult drug court.

This funding, through BJA's fiscal year 2023 Adult Treatment Court Site-Based program, will be used to increase the court's capac-

ity, serving an additional 60 participants.

Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Salem, said, "This funding by the Bureau of Justice Assistance will allow the Piedmont Regional Community Services Board to expand its drug court to help an additional 60 individuals with pending felony drug or drug-related charges battle their addiction, reduce their chance of recidivism, and find stability, through housing and employment."

A delicious time was had at Savory September at Piedmont Arts

Piedmont Arts hosted its annual Savory September Fundraiser on Friday, Sept. 22. This fundraiser, a themed meal featuring creations by local professional and amateur chefs, featured a bar and live music by Jake Earles. Savory September has been the annual fall fundraiser for Piedmont Arts for over 30 years, and this year was the most successful yet. The theme this year was “Buon Appetito!” a celebration of all things Italian. Additional entertainment included a 50/50 raffle where the pot was split between the winner and Piedmont Arts.

Savory September featured handmade creations from ten local chefs, including Luke Pollom and Janet Ashby from King’s Grant. In addition, many tables served themed cocktails including a limoncello cannoli martini, espresso martinis, Aperol spritzes, and negronis. The chefs went all out decorating their tables in red, white, and green; twinkly lights; flags; and

illustrations. The flower arrangements on the tables and the main centerpiece in the gallery were all created by Brad Draper of Draper Flowers & Gifts.

The committee making this event possible included Piedmont Arts staff, past and present board members, and community members. Chefs included Luke Pollom and Janet Ashby of King’s Grant; Julia and Blake Shumate; Ouss Sahar and Kerry Smith; Beverly Lyle and Jennifer Reis; Spencer Koger; Susan Critz and Marty Gardner; Blanche Mahoney, Barbara Stanley, and Esther Schilbe; Anna Wheeler and Monique Holland; Holly and Robby Burton; and Laura Frazier, Christina Slate, and Liz Harris. Sponsors for the event included the Beegins with You Foundation, Burton & Co., Draper Flowers & Gifts, Collinsville Printing, Diversified Trust, Visit Martinsville, Martinsville Eyecare, Ameristaff, Third Bay, and Hairston Funeral Home.



Smiling faces were seen all around as attendees explored the offerings of the chefs.



Jennifer Reis and Beverly Lyle raise a toast with their handcrafted negronis at Savory September.



Susan Critz and Marty Gardner pose with their beautifully decorated table.

Task Force appointed to stem absenteeism

Several school officials, a parent and other community leaders were named to the Chronic Absenteeism Task Force, a key pillar of Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s comprehensive ALL IN VA plan to accelerate the learning loss recovery by addressing Attendance, Literacy and Learning. The Task Force, in response to a near doubling of chronic absenteeism in Virginia classrooms resulting from extended pandemic closure of schools, will develop resources and distribute action plans for school divisions to address the record-high student absenteeism rates across the Commonwealth.

“The decision to shutter schools for extended periods during the pandemic continues to have lasting, detrimental effects on our children. To prevent losing an entire generation of children, Virginia is leading the way to accelerate our students’ learning loss recovery through intensive tutoring and combating chronic absenteeism,” said Youngkin. “Children must be in school to have any chance of recovering from the persistent learning loss facing students across the Commonwealth. Our new Chronic

Absenteeism Task Force was designed to get kids back in the classroom and back on track now.”

Noting that the chronic absenteeism rate has doubled over the past three years, Secretary of Education Aimee Rogstad Guidera said that currently, “nearly one in five students in Virginia are missing more than 10% of the school year. Commonsense tells us that students must be in school. The data proves it—students who are chronically absent are 25% further behind in math and 18% further behind in reading.”

Virginia’s Department of Education recently completed a two-week listening tour in all eight Superintendent Regions meeting with instructional leads and superintendents to outline the ALL IN VA plan and next steps.

“Coming to school everyday matters,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Lisa Coons. “As I have met with superintendents across the Commonwealth, they have asked us to work with them to make sure the message is clear: kids need to be in school.”

The Chronic Absenteeism Task Force will meet

every two weeks to discuss the factors contributing to chronic absenteeism such as food scarcity, health and safety and transportation. With the understanding that parents must be responsible, the Task Force will develop actions for school divisions to effectively address school divisions’ biggest barriers to reducing chronic absenteeism. In addition, the Task Force may identify any regulatory hurdles prohibiting best practices from scaling to meet communities’ needs.

Following each Task Force session, the department will push out practical solutions to all Superintendents for immediate implementation and awareness. Solutions will be posted to the Department’s ALL IN VA webpage and on social media.

Virginia’s Standard of Learning scores demonstrate that student achievement remains well below pre-pandemic levels. The Youngkin administration is taking further aggressive action to ensure all Virginia students get the academic support they need to recover learning loss, boost their attendance, and improve academic performance.

State budget emphasizes youth mental health, community-based care

By Emily Richardson, Capital News Service

The recently finalized Virginia budget makes significant investments in mental health services across the state, according to mental health advocates.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin signed the budget into law in early September. It allocates billions of dollars in surplus funds to be used for the remainder of the fiscal year, which ends in July. Many components of the funding for mental health services reflect Youngkin’s “Right Help, Right Now” behavioral health plan, which emphasizes community-centered mental health care.

The budget allocates \$58 million from the general fund to “expand and modernize” Virginia’s comprehensive crisis services system. This includes investment in crisis receiving centers and crisis stabilization units, as well as enhancements to existing sites. Crisis receiving centers are alternatives to hospital emergency rooms, and offer communities a “no-wrong-door access to mental health and substance use care,” according to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.

Youth Mental Health Care

Lawmakers allocated over \$10 million for the Virginia Mental Health Access Program. The program helps address the state’s shortage of pediatric mental health specialists by training primary care providers in mental health care and

offering a call line for weekly support, according to the program’s assistant director of operations Rachel Reynolds.

There are 264 child and adolescent psychiatrists in Virginia, according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. That equates to 14 psychiatrists for every 100,000 children, the national average, and falls within the range of a “severe shortage.” There are many counties without a child psychiatrist.

This \$4 million increase from last year will help the program broaden its service scope beyond pediatric care, Reynolds said.

“The biggest part of this additional \$4 million allocation is going to be used to expand the program to perinatal health and maternal health,” Reynolds said. “It’s going to be able to include support for postpartum individuals, and they can be seen either through a pediatric office or an OB-GYN’s office.”

More than \$12 million is allocated for child psychiatry and children’s crisis response services and divided among health planning regions based on the current availability of services. The funds can be used to hire or contract child psychiatrists, train other health care providers or create new crisis response services with an ultimate goal to keep children out of inpatient care and encourage community-based services.

The budget included an additional \$5 million for school-based mental health integration grants. These grants

allow schools to partner with community mental health providers and bring care directly to students, according to Rachael Deane, CEO of Voices for Virginia’s Children, a child policy and advocacy organization.

“It’s really bringing that support system to the school, which we feel is a really commonsense way to go about it,” Deane said. “We know that kids spend a lot of their time in school and in the school community, and these grants allow schools to help meet mental health needs by bringing folks into the school setting.”

Voices for Virginia’s Children continues to advocate for sustained funding for school-based mental health programs, Deane said. Overall, the organization is pleased with what funding has been allocated but “could always use more.”

“We’re immediately now looking forward to December, where the governor will unveil his proposal for the next biennial budget in Virginia, and we’re hoping that even more investments for mental health will be in that budget,” Deane said.

Community-Based Care

Other funding highlights include a one-time fund of \$5 million for the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to contract with local law enforcement agencies to transport individuals in emergency mental health situations to treatment facilities or to assume custody of them.

An allocated \$18 million will allow

community services boards staff to see a salary increase, effective Jan. 1 next year.

The budget allocates \$3.1 million, a \$1.5 million increase since last year, for the Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program. The program promises to repay a portion of an eligible behavioral health professional’s student loan debt in exchange for their commitment to practice in Virginia for a minimum of two years, according to the Virginia Department of Health.

A student loan repayment program, and others like it, can help support the pipeline for mental health professionals, according to Bruce Cruser, executive director of the advocacy group Mental Health America of Virginia.

This budget is a great first step, Cruser said, but the organization hopes to see more support and funding for the pipeline in the next biennial budget.

“We could have all the funded services out there in the world, but if we don’t have people to provide the services, it doesn’t get us anywhere,” Cruser said.

“We need to have incentives to encourage people to go into the mental health field at all levels, from psychiatric nursing to therapists to psychiatrists to peer supporters,” Cruser said. “We really want to see a big effort there.”

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.

Education, health and housing top volunteer list

Serve Virginia, the lead agency of the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) for community service and volunteerism, released the inaugural Virginia Community Engagement Index (VCEI), a new resource that shows firsthand information about how Virginians dedicate their time to the organizations and activities that serve their communities.

According to the VCEI, Virginians dedicate their time to organizations that address the needs they care about most. Education (48 percent), health and well-being (47 percent) and housing (40 percent) ranked as high priority needs facing their communities. Respondents also frequently reported volunteering with youth or educational organizations, food pantries or hunger relief efforts, as well as hospitals or health organizations. The VCEI reports that spirituality and lived experience are among the top five reasons Virginians choose to volunteer their time to their communities; houses of worship or religious organizations are in the top five places respondents choose to volunteer.

Through a survey disseminated in January, Serve Virginia collected responses from more than 6,000 Virginians who provided insights on volunteerism, informal helping, and other civic actions across the Commonwealth.

“The VCEI is a first-of-its-kind resource that provides data and

insight about how Virginians serve in their communities as well as a framework that will connect research to strategic action,” says Kathy Spangler, director of Serve Virginia. “This report represents a unique moment for Virginia as we use this unprecedented level of insight into civic health and community engagement to identify our most pressing community needs and mobilize around effective solutions.”

Virginians not only contributed to the good of their community through organized activities, but also by regularly helping their neighbors. The VCEI found that 7 out of 10 people report helping others through informal service with over 50 percent saying they do so more than once a month. Those that identify as active volunteers report engaging in service multiple times per month. Respondents report the feeling of fulfillment from helping others, the opportunity to share their skills, and the social environment provided by volunteer activities as the reasons they continue to volunteer with organizations across the Commonwealth.

“The VCEI helps us understand what it means to ‘show up in our communities’, whether we’re talking about volunteering, voting, philanthropy, or advocacy. This is also about building the relationships we need,” says Vanessa Diamond, senior vice

president of civic engagement at Community Foundation for Greater Richmond and member of the VCEI core team. “The conversations we had when developing the VCEI were so essential; these are the conversations we need to continue having if we want to strengthen the infrastructure of Virginia’s social and civic network, build better programming, and strengthen access points for community members to get involved.”

The strategy and design of the VCEI involved the engagement and input of more than 38 Virginia organizations and institutions. SIR, a Richmond-based research and consulting firm, was recruited to support the design and provide analyses of the more than 6,000 responses received from residents throughout the Commonwealth.

The Virginia Community Engagement Index, available online at Serve Virginia, brings a state, regional, and local level focus to national volunteerism research, including AmeriCorps’ biannual study on Volunteering and Civic Engagement in America and recent findings from Points of Light. The VCEI insights are designed to inform how communities mobilize using service and volunteerism as an asset to address pressing needs and priorities, while inspiring all Virginians to get involved and make a difference.



Jimmy Hunt, of Collinsville, won the top prize in Sapphire Mine game.

Collinsville man wins the top prize in Sapphire Mine game

Jimmy Hunt wasn’t expecting much when he scratched a Sapphire Mine ticket from the Virginia Lottery. However, his ticket turned out to be the game’s first \$500,000 top prize winner.

The Collinsville man bought his winning ticket at the Circle K at 1560 Virginia Avenue in Martinsville.

Sapphire Mine is one of the Precious Gems series of scratcher games available from the Virginia Lottery. It features prizes ranging from \$10 up to \$500,000. This is the first top prize claimed in this game, which means two more remain unclaimed.

The chances of winning that top prize are 1 in 816,000. The chances of winning any prize in this game are 1 in 3.83.

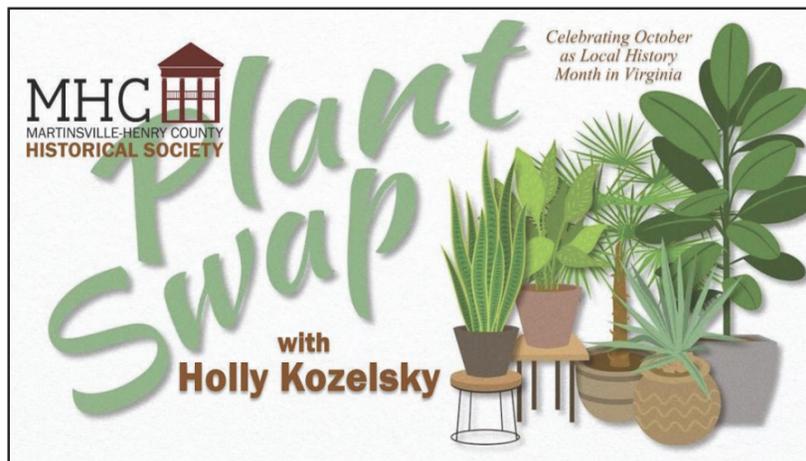
Hunt said he plans to do some traveling with his family.

All Virginia Lottery profits go to K-12 education in Virginia. Mr. Hunt lives in Henry County, which received more than \$7.8 million in Lottery funds for K-12 education last fiscal year. In Fiscal Year 2023, the Lottery raised more than \$867 million for K-12 education, making up approximately 10 percent of Virginia’s total K-12 school budget.

For a complete list of Lottery funds distributed to Virginia school districts, visit the Virginia Lottery’s Giving Back page. For general information or to play games online, visit the Virginia Lottery’s website or download the Lottery’s app. Connect with the Lottery on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube.

With all gaming, please play responsibly.

Plant Swap set for Saturday



The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will host “Plant Swap with Holly Kozelsky” on Saturday, October 14, at the Historic Henry County Courthouse, 1 East Main Street. An optional potluck luncheon will begin inside at noon with the plant swap following at 1 p.m. on the brick Plaza.

Attendees will trade plants, seeds, cuttings, divisions, tools, pots, fun, and conversation with other interested gardeners. However, folks do NOT have to bring items to trade to participate as gardeners love nothing better than to share plants and advice.

New gardeners are especially welcome. Parking is available around the old courthouse and in the Bridge and Depot streets parking lots. Volunteers will be available to help load and unload. Forty FREE perennials – phlox (a native plant easy to grow and common at old house sites), purple cone-flower (echinacea), or iris – will be given away, one per person while supplies last.

“The origins of plant swaps can be traced back to the late 19th century when American gardeners began exchanging plants and seeds with each other,” said John Phillips, president of the Historical Society. “This

informal system of sharing allowed gardeners to expand their collections and diversify their gardens. Our new executive director, Holly Kozelsky, hosted a plant swap at her home for many years. We are fortunate to now host it with her in a more convenient location.”

There is no charge to participate or attend, made possible by corporate sponsors, Carter Bank & Trust and The Lester Group. The Historic Henry County Courthouse is fully handicapped accessible. The Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center & Museum will be open during the event.



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