

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, October 28, 2023

(USPS-6)

www.henrycountyenterprise.com • \$1.00



Mary Martin, who is seeking the At Large seat on the Henry County School Board, addressed the Board of Supervisors about a compensation study.



Henry County Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Administrative Services Dr. Benjamin Boone said a 7 percent raise was given to all school teachers and employees.

Supervisors field questions about compensation study

Taylor Boyd
Staff writer

The Henry County Board of Supervisors heard concerns about the teacher pay portion of a compensation study at a meeting

Tuesday. Mary Martin, who is one of two candidates seeking the At Large seat on the Henry County School Board, referenced the compensation study released in June. In addition to school division

employees, the results of the study included county employees, as well as those employed by the sheriff's office and the Public Service Authority (PSA).

See Supervisors, page 7

Applications for Christmas Cheer now being accepted

Christmas Cheer began accepting applications on Monday, October 23, and will be open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. until Friday, November 17.

The office is located at 300 Franklin St, Suite 226, Martinsville. This is the Clock Tower building, formerly Tultex, near Chick-fil-A and Taco Bell.

Applications must be completed in person and proof of residency in Martinsville or Henry County is required, along with a photo ID. All household residents must be listed, with their date of birth. Acceptable proof of residency is a Virginia driver's license, a city or county utility bill, or AEP bill.

Christmas Cheer has been assisting families in need residing in Martinsville and Henry County since 1951. Providing toys to children 10 and under, the program also provides each household with a generous food box and blanket. The fundraising goal for 2023 has been set at \$45,000.

Donations can be mailed to PO Box 540, Martinsville, VA 24114, or dropped off at the Cheer Office.

Board grants tax relief for elderly and disabled



Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis was asked to provide safety tips for those who plan to go trick or treating for Halloween.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted on Tuesday to grant additional real estate tax relief for certain elderly, disabled, and handicapped individuals. Residents who meet the criteria and have an annual income below \$24,000 will now be eligible for a maximum exemption of \$500.

Previously, the threshold for Henry County residents to qualify was an income below \$17,000 and the maximum exemption was \$300. County staff expect these changes to have only a modest impact on the annual budget. In other matters, the board:

- Amended the county's transient occupancy tax ordinance to increase the rate from two percent to five percent, effective Jan. 1, 2024.

See Board, page 5

Warner among those to call for strengthened border security

By Staff Reports

Citing increases in deaths due to drug overdoses, U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner and several of their Democrat colleagues are among those calling on the Biden Administration for additional U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents and increased processing and screening capacity at ports of entry, as well as acquiring non-invasive inspection technology to stop drug smugglers before their fentanyl hits American fentanyl.

"We urge you to prioritize additional funding, resources, and innovative strategies to



U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner is pictured during a recent visit to Mabry Mill, located on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Patrick County.

strengthen the security of our southwest border and address the multiple, overlapping challenges there,"

Warner, D-Alexandria, and his colleagues wrote to Pres. Joe Biden last week.

"We have long supported increasing funding for comprehensive measures

See Warner, page 6

Marlowe offers new insights into the area's prominence in war

By Holly Kozelsky

Were it not for an eve-of-surrender battle in Martinsville, the entire Civil War would have ended quite differently.

That's the theory of Jarred Marlowe, who on Tuesday gave the program "April 25: Danville, Martinsville, and the End of the Civil War" at the Bassett Historical Center.

The Civil War ran from April 12, 1861, to April 9, 1865. Throughout most of the war, the capital of the Confederate States of America was Richmond. However,



Historian Jarred Marlowe gives the program April 25 - Danville, Martinsville, and the End of the Civil War at the Bassett Historical Center.

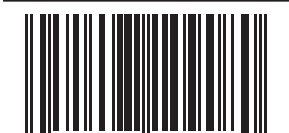
on April 2, 1865, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his cabinet relocated to

Danville, where they stationed themselves at the mansion of Maj. William T. Sutherlin,

wartime quartermaster for Danville. (That

See Marlowe, page 8

VISIT
HTTP://WWW.
HENRYCOUNTY
ENTERPRISE.COM
FOR MORE
UPDATES





Rare reunion of Broke Mountain Bluegrass Band is first band announced for Rooster Walk 14

Broke Mountain Bluegrass Band, two nights of Daniel Donato's Cosmic Country, TAUk Moore, Dogs in a Pile, Yarn, Mountain Grass Unit, Isaac Hadden Organ Trio, Sol Driven Train, J & The Causeways, Colby T. Helms & The Virginia Creepers, Clay Street Unit, Mighty Joshua

Another 30 bands to be announced in the coming months!

Broke Mountain Bluegrass Band will perform its first East Coast set in nearly 20 years at the 14th annual Rooster Walk Music & Arts Festival, set for May 23-26, at Pop's Farm in Martinsville, Va.

A bluegrass band from Colorado, Broke Mountain was formed in 2003 by a group of then-unknown, incredibly talented college musicians in their very early 20s. Remarkably, the members went to establish star-studded careers in nationally touring bluegrass bands. Broke Mountain is comprised of Anders Beck (dobro/Greensky Bluegrass), Travis Book (bass/Infamous Stringdusters), Robin Davis (mandolin/The Robin Davis Duo), Jon Stickley (guitar/Jon Stickley Trio) and Andy Thorn (banjo/Leftover Salmon). Broke Mountain juggled college studies and touring duties in the summers of 2003 and 2004 in Colorado and surrounding states before parting ways to accept full-time touring gigs with other bands. Now celebrating its 20th anniversary with a full album re-release, Broke Mountain's Rooster Walk debut will also double as its first ever East Coast festival set.

In contrast to Broke Mountain, Daniel

Donato's Cosmic Country will perform for the third consecutive year at Rooster Walk. The band, led by electric guitar virtuoso Daniel Donato, has been one of the fastest-growing acts in the country over the past two years, selling out venues from coast to coast. Daniel Donato will perform two nights at RW14.

Also joining the first band announcement is TAUk Moore, a special collaboration between TAUk and female powerhouse vocalist Kanika Moore. A largely instrumental jam band, TAUk has performed late-night sets at RW multiple times in the past 10 years. They will be joined for the full set by Moore, the lead singer of Doom Flamingo, which played a late-night set at RW13 last May.

Other bands announced Tuesday include: Dogs in a Pile (a New Jersey-based funk/jazz/rock jamband surging in nationwide popularity); Yarn (NC/NY roots rockers who will once again perform an original set and a festival-finishing tribute set); Mountain Grass Unit (up and coming bluegrass shredders from Alabama); Isaac Hadden Organ Trio (masterful musicianship from a North Carolina power trio); Sol Driven Train (upbeat, horn-driven rock'n'roll beach vibes from Charleston, SC); J & The Causeways (New Orleans-based soul powerhouse reminiscent of St. Paul & The Broken Bones); Colby T. Helms & The Virginia Creepers (a captivating bluegrass band from nearby

See **Rooster Walk**, page 3

Martinsville launches new website, app for non-emergency reporting

The City of Martinsville is excited to announce the launch of the SDL Portal, a mobile app and website designed to streamline services. This platform allows residents and visitors to submit complaints, access property information, and retrieve vital city information, all with unprecedented convenience and accessibility.

The City of Martinsville's commitment to embracing technology to better serve its community and the portal's features include:

Online Reporting: The SDL Portal allows residents to easily report non-emergency issues, such as potholes, streetlight outages, or other concerns directly to the city's authorities. This also includes the ability to attach photos and descriptions.

Search Property Information: Property owners and potential buyers can access property information. This feature streamlines the process of researching properties within the city.

Access Information 24/7: The SDL Portal provides access to a wealth of information about Martinsville allowing users to stay informed and engaged with the community effortlessly.

The SDL Portal is compatible with both iOS and Android devices and can be accessed through any web browser. Residents and visitors are encouraged to download the app or visit the website.

To learn more and access the SDL Portal, please visit <https://www.martinsville-va.gov/476/City-Fix-Martinsville>.

Scheduling conflict will prevent Cobler from participating in debate

Reed Creek District candidate Pam Cobler said she will not be able to participate in a political debate held by BTW 21.

"This decision arises not from an aversion to healthy discourse and questions, but rather from a commitment to prioritize direct communication with the community and a commitment to a previously planned engagement," she wrote in a release.

Cobler said her primary commitment lies with the constituents she serves, as well as each event, meeting, and engagements as her schedule allows. The proposed debate coincides with a prior engagement that was scheduled well in advance.

It is essential to honor and respect the commitments previously made, which is why she is unable to rearrange her schedule to accommodate this debate. It is not a decision taken lightly, but rather one made with the utmost consideration for the importance of every interaction. This unforeseen scheduling conflict is in no way a reflection of Dr. Cobler's commitment to open dialogue.

"It is my duty to be available to my constituents, to listen, and to address their concerns directly. Listening to the needs of my constituents is of paramount importance to me and I believe that face-to-face interactions and community meetings

most strongly provide intimate and insightful platforms for meaningful dialogue," Cobler stated.

In the coming weeks until Election Day, Tuesday, November 7, Cobler said she will continue visiting various localities, meeting with voters while listening to their concerns firsthand, embarking on a comprehensive campaign, and attending local events.

"I remain deeply committed to open, transparent, and accessible communication with the community. I look forward to continuing this dialogue through the various engagements and I will work diligently to ensure that every voice is heard, and concerns are addressed," Cobler said.

Information sought in jewelry store heist

The Henry County Sheriff's Office is asking anyone with information on a robbery that occurred at Eden Jewelry located at 1141 Memorial Blvd., Martinsville, around 10:45 a.m. on Tuesday, October 24.

Three Hispanic men, all wearing face masks, entered the business and produced a firearm and demanded jewelry, according to Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis.

The men "were armed with handguns," Davis said, adding physical evidence was left behind at

the scene.

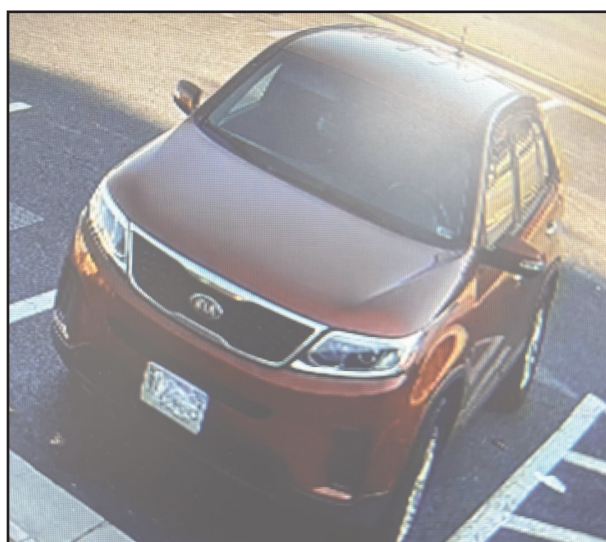
Three employees who were in the store were detained by the suspects and placed in a backroom during the robbery. While the robbery was taking place a customer entered the store where he was also detained by one of the suspects, Davis said.

After taking an undisclosed amount of jewelry, the suspects fled the scene in a 2014 Red KIA Sorento.

The suspects were described as Hispanic males who were speaking Spanish.

"This was an egregious robbery. We won't tolerate it," Davis said. "We want to bring whoever done this to justice."

The investigation is ongoing, 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. The nature of the crime and the substance of the information determine the amount of reward paid.



✓ Why Sheriff Davis Is The Best Choice For Henry County

- ★ Sheriff Wayne Davis has faithfully served the citizens of Henry County for the past 23 years.
- ★ Sheriff Davis is the *only* certified law enforcement professional in the Henry County Sheriff's election.
- ★ Sheriff Davis placed a School Resource Officer in every Henry County Public School.
- ★ He brought the D.A.R.E. program back to Henry County Schools.
- ★ Pledges to bring the Henry County Sheriff's Office to the forefront of technology to better fight crime.
- ★ He has served in patrol, investigations, SWAT, and every level of supervision and leadership.
- ★ Sheriff Davis is certified by the Virginia Sheriff's Institute. Only 29 Sheriffs in Virginia have ever achieved this certification.

Paid For and Authorized by D. Wayne Davis Jr. for Sheriff

Sheriff Wayne Davis Humbly Asks For Your VOTE On November 7th!

✓ Elect SHERIFF DAVIS

★ EXPERIENCE MATTERS ★

Paid For and Authorized by D. Wayne Davis Jr. for Sheriff

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.

AWANA meets at Blackberry Baptist Church on Sundays, from 4-6 p.m.

Thursday, November 2

The Henry County School Board's monthly meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the Summerlin Room on the 1st Floor of the County Administration Building in Collinsville. The regular meeting will be followed by closed session.

Events

Saturday, October 28

Books & Treats, a trunk or treat event, 5-7 p.m. at the Martinsville Main Library Branch, 310 E. Church St., Martinsville, with an interactive Halloween Storytime Schedule. Walk the Trail of Treats and visit the Spooky Garden. Books and treats will be available while supplies last.

Trucks and Treats with treats, prizes and games, 6 p.m., Marshall Way in Fieldale, sponsored by the Fieldale Volunteer Fire Company.

Tuesday, October 31

Uptown Trick-or-Treat, 4-6 p.m. Participating businesses include Barking Beauties LLC, Charity League of MHC, Collins-McKee-Stone Funeral Home, Food Lion-Greensboro Road, Just Breathe Yoga & BodyWorks, Teen Arts Council-Piedmont Arts. Park in the Broad Street Parking Lot and follow the loop of businesses down Church Street and back up Main Street.

Friday, November 3

Exhibit Opening Reception – Venus Inferred and Z.L. Feng, 5:30 p.m. at Piedmont Arts
Join Piedmont Arts for an opening reception in honor of the museum's new exhibits. Gallery talk at 6:15 p.m. Free and open to the public. Complimentary wine and light refreshments. Live music. RSVP by October 30.

Friday, November 3 – Saturday, November 4

Yard Sale 8 to 1 at Fieldale Recreation Center, 7 Marshall Way, Fieldale. Cash only. Lots of bargains and great Christmas gifts.

Rooster Walk

from page 1

Franklin County, Va.); Clay Street Unit (Colorado-based honky tonk/roots rock); and Mighty Joshua (authentic reggae from central Virginia).

More than 30 additional bands will be added to the lineup, including the overall headliners, in the coming months.

Tickets for Rooster Walk 14 go on sale at noon Friday (Oct. 27, 2023) at the newly redesigned www.roosterwalk.com, which also features all the information needed to plan for an amazing experience.

The festival will take place Thursday-Sunday of Memorial Day weekend in the rolling foothills surrounding Martinsville, Va. Rooster Walk is a 4-day festival celebrating music, art, and the great outdoors at the idyllic Pop's Farm venue. With roughly 50

bands performing on 6 different stages, and an amazing roster of stellar music steers the Rooster Walk experience.

In addition to approximately 80 sets of live music, the family-friendly Rooster Walk will offer a wide variety of kids' programming, family fun, craft beer, great food, arts and numerous opportunities to enjoy Virginia's great outdoors with kayak river floats, pedal boats, bike rides, yoga, a disc golf course and beautiful on-site camping.

Rooster Walk has been named one of the Top 5 festivals in the state by the Richmond-Times Dispatch. It also was voted the region's Most Creative Charitable Event by readers of Virginia Living Magazine for three consecutive years. The festival was created in memory of late Martinsville natives

Saturday, November 4

Blackberry Baptist Church's Free Event "FALL-O-WEEN JESUS FESTIVAL," 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., featuring Four4One Quartet! Festive Foods, Kids Activities, Live Animals, Train Ride to Pumpkin Patch, Candy, Games and much more.

An afternoon of family fun is planned at "Hometown Heroes Touch A Truck Fundraiser," hosted by the Bassett Library Building Expansion Committee at HJDB Event Center and Bassett Branch Library, 3969 Fairystone Park Hwy, Bassett, from 2-6 p.m. Children 2 & under are free. Child's wristbands are \$10; Adult \$5 to touch everything. We will have representatives from Bassett Fire Department; Bassett Rescue Squad; Henry County law enforcement; VDOT; Air Life Helicopter; Henry Co. Mobile Health Unit; AEP; PSA; & more. There will be a bouncy house and slide. Snacks and water for sale. All proceeds benefit the Bassett Library Building Expansion Fund. The rain date is Nov. 5, 2-6 p.m. Call (276) 629-2426 with questions.

Storytime at the Spencer Penn Centre, 10 a.m. This monthly program will include special readers, crafts, and other fun activities related to Falling Leaves. Come out and join us for this free program, fit for all ages. Registration is not needed.

Friday, November 10

Music Night at the Spencer Penn Centre, with Gap Civil, to play in Alumni Hall. Gate opens at 5 p.m. with the band starting at 6:15 p.m. Admission is a \$5 CASH donation. Come enjoy some great mountain music and dancing! Concessions, including our ever-popular Spencer Penn hotdogs, will be sold.

Sunday, November 12

"The Maps of Thomas Jefferson" by Zack Fleming: 3 p.m., at the Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center & Museum, 1 E. Main St., Martinsville.

Tuesday, November 14

Renae "Spring Morning" Wagoner will present a Native American program, "We Are Still Here," at 10:30 a.m. in the Bassett Historical Center. Renae is of Shawnee descent and lives in Spencer. Proud of her heritage, she is honored to be able to share a part of her culture, and hopes you will look with a more insightful view of the American Indian, with perhaps a better understanding of their views and how they came to have them all while having an enjoyable morning learning something new and realizing yes, Native Americans are still here. This program is free and open to the public and 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

Registration for Upward Basketball and Cheerleading for youngsters aged 5 years through 5th grade, until Nov. 30. Practices begin Jan. 6, with a first game on Jan. 27 and the last game set for March 16. Cost is \$65. All practices and games are held at Fort Trial Baptist Church, 170 Oak Level Road, Stanleytown. For more information, call (276) 629-2964 or pastordreed81@gmail.com.

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 brrl.lib.va.us.

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

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

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.

SUPPORT COMMUNITY JOURNALISM

WE OFFER FLEXIBLE
ADVERTISING PACKAGES,
IN PRINT, ONLINE, OR BOTH.

SPECIAL DEALS AND PROMOTIONS
OFFERED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!

CALL US TODAY AT (276) 694-3101
OR (276) 693-3713.

Edwin "The Rooster" Penn and Walker Shank, who graduated from Martinsville High School in 2000.

A portion of proceeds from the festival will be donated to local and regional charities, including Rooster Walk's own Penn-Shank Memorial Endowment Scholarship Fund for students at Martinsville High School, and the Rooster Walk Music

Instrument Program for public band programs in the local city and county school systems.

The festival is produced by Rooster Walk Inc., a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to promoting music, arts and education in its home of Martinsville-Henry County. Since 2009, Rooster Walk Inc. has donated more than \$320,000 to local and regional charities.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF RICKY "BIG BIRD" HOLCOMB

SPONSORED BY:



REGISTRATION STARTS AT 10AM
RIDE STARTS
Bird's
6537 GREENSBORO ROAD,
RIDGWAY
RIDE ENDS AT
SPORTLANE'S
10 KOEHLER ROAD,
MARTINSVILLE

\$20 PER RIDER OR \$30 FOR DOUBLES
SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 11
RIDE STARTS
1:00PM
ALL PROCEEDS GO TO LOCAL CHILDREN THIS CHRISTMAS!

MUSIC BY **MADHOUSE**

OPINION

Famous monsters of Washington, D.C.

I couldn't decide whether I wanted to write a fun Halloween column or a column about the rolling embarrassment that is the current search for a House Speaker. I figured, why not split the difference? Here's my round-up of several Famous Monsters of Filmland and how I think they would perform in the role of 56th Speaker of the House. Enjoy!

Count Dracula
Rating: Excellent

As a charismatic monster who sucks the lifeblood from peasants, Count Dracula is already a seasoned politician in everything but title. At nearly 600 years old, he would be our fourth oldest Congressman.

Jason Voorhees
Rating: Decent

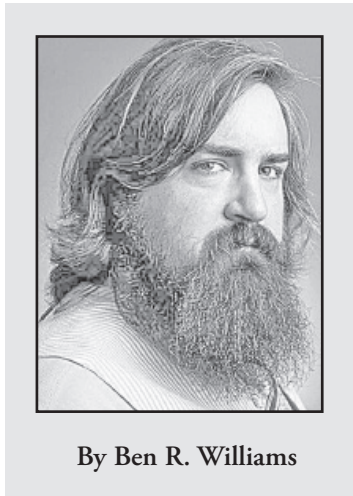
Given his propensity for

murdering people at lakes, Jason Voorhees would likely do everything within his power to prevent a government shutdown that would cause lakes on National Park properties to close to the public.

Over the course of his career in "Friday the 13th" movies, Jason has proven himself to be driven, a real go-getter. In order to fulfill his goal of murdering as many teenagers as possible, Jason has risen from the dead on multiple occasions and has even traveled to both outer space and Hell. He is ambitious, effective, and an unstoppable force, all qualities that, unfortunately, immediately disqualify him from the role of House Speaker.

The Creature from the Black Lagoon
Rating: Poor

While the American people



By Ben R. Williams

are willing to support figurative swamp monsters, a literal swamp monster may be too on-the-nose.

Godzilla
Rating: Poor

Over the course of his film career, Godzilla has served as a metaphor for the dangers of nuclear war, pollution, and climate change. Based on this history, Tucker Carlson would immediately label him "Wokezilla," thereby sinking

his chances of ever becoming House Speaker.

The Thing
Rating: Poor

A shape-shifting organism from beyond the stars that can assimilate living creatures and replicate them, the Thing is actually a colonial organism consisting of millions of cells working in unison to achieve a common goal. This concept of cooperation is utterly antithetical to modern American politics.

Norman Bates
Rating: Average

Despite Bates' illustrious career in hotel management, the waning popularity of Mike Pence has proven that America no longer has patience for tense buttoned-down weirdos with undiagnosed mother issues.

Freddy Krueger
Rating: Excellent

Star of the "Nightmare on Elm Street" series, Freddy Krueger has proven to be

charming and lovable even while murdering teenagers. Given that Freddy exists in the Dream World and can only interact with people while they're asleep, it may seem like he has the deck stacked against him; however, given that Congress is largely made up of extremely elderly people who barely exist in the conscious world, this shouldn't present a major setback.

It's tempting to think that being a serial child molester would prevent Freddy Krueger from serving as House Speaker. However, it didn't slow down Dennis Hastert.

Frankenstein's Monster
Rating: Poor

After their experience with Donald Trump, it's unlikely that the GOP would lend support to yet another abomination imbued with unholy power that eventually proved impossible to control and turned on its masters.

News from the 9th: AI in Energy



Morgan Griffith
Representative

Commerce Committee, we recently held a hearing examining the ways that AI could be used to benefit our energy sector.

As energy consumption and our standard of living increases decade after decade, we must find new ways to provide Americans with safe, reliable, and affordable energy. AI is being used to support those goals.

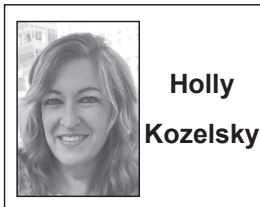
We heard from witnesses about how AI is accelerating cutting-edge energy technologies by processing data to aid research-

ers, while also helping to reduce both cost and time when developing new technologies.

In the oil and gas industry, AI is being used to better process geothermal 3D seismic data and optimize drilling operations. It can increase production in refineries, help manage wells and reservoirs, increase yield, all while finding ways to decrease oil well energy usage, which will in turn bring down costs.

See 9th, page 6

Trick-or-treating



Holly Kozelsky

We are well past the golden age of trick-or-treating and instead are finalizing the epoch of a free-for-all senseless grab of candy.

While the roots of Halloween go back millennia and through religions (but mostly from pagan harvest festivals of the Celts), trick-or-treating originated in America in the 20th century and hit its apex in the 1930s to the 1960s.

Centuries ago, those pagan festivals marked the transition from the sunny, warm, bountiful summery time of year to the dark, lonely times of winter. On Samhain (pronounced "SOW-en") or All Hallow's Eve, it was thought that the veil between the living and dead was the thinnest, so there was the fear you could be drawn into the dark

side. People would dress up as ghouls and other creatures to confuse those ghosts and demons who came after souls – if you looked like you already were one of them, they may not go after you.

In the European tradition of souling, the poor would visit the houses of the wealthy to pray for the souls of the departed, and in return, would receive pastries called soul cakes. As time went on, children took up that practice and would ask for gifts such as food, drink or money.

In Scotland and Ireland, they would dress in costume and sing, tell jokes or otherwise perform a trick before collecting a treat, such as food or coins. Some would commit pranks which they blamed on the Samhain.

Another practice that led up to trick-or-treating was the annual celebration of Guy Fawkes Night, also known as Bonfire Night. It commemorates when Fawkes's plan to blow up the British Parliament building in 1605 were thwarted. Bonfires were lit, burning the symbolic

bones of the Catholic pope, and later, British children work masks and carried effigies while begging "a penny for the Guy."

Immigrants to American brought with them those traditions which eventually would meld together. By the early 1900s, children and teenagers would roam around on Hallowe'en night pulling off pranks.

The Henry Bulletin in November 1922 described these "customary" pranks that young people dressed in "weird and ghostly costumes" played in Martinsville on Oct. 31, the eve of All Saint's Day: Nearly all the porch furniture in some areas of town was moved from one house to the next or was hidden away; some jokers blocked traffic; the school bell tolled when it wasn't supposed to.

One man the next morning discovered that his flivver (a small, cheap, usually old automobile), which he had left parked in front of his house, had been moved 35 feet down the street.

See Halloween, page 6



Medicare Advantage: One plan, one card, many benefits

With plans designed for all styles, stages and ages of Medicare, more people count on UnitedHealthcare for their Medicare Advantage plans. Our licensed sales agents will help you find a plan with more benefits — including dental, vision, and prescription drug coverage, plus access to Medicare Advantage's largest national provider network¹.

Stop by during the times listed to get answers to your questions from a Medicare Plan Expert.

Collinsville
10/31, 11/7, 11/16
9AM-12PM
11/2, 11/14, 11/21
2PM-4:30PM

Collinsville
11/01 & 11/08
10:00 AM
Community Mtg.

Legacy Insurance
3959 Virginia Ave
Collinsville, VA
24078

Dutch Inn
2360 Virginia Ave
Collinsville, VA
24078

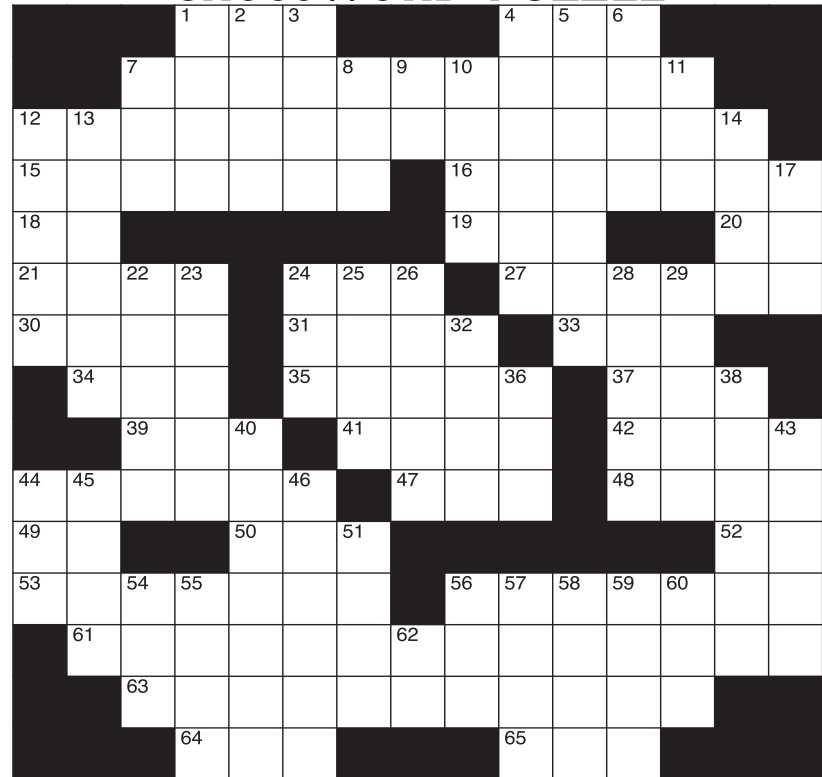
Get more of what matters.
myuhcagent.com

For accommodations of persons with special needs at meetings call 1-844-743-6328, TTY 711. Benefits, features and/or devices vary by plan/area. Limitations, exclusions and/or network restrictions may apply. Plans are insured through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or one of its affiliated companies, a Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in the plan depends on the plan's contract renewal with Medicare. ¹Provider network may vary in local market. Provider network size based on Zelis Network360, May 2023. The UnitedHealthcare Medicare Plan Expert is a licensed sales agent/producer. © 2023 United HealthCare Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Y0066_230731_071712_M

SPRJ82531

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Unhappy
 - 4. Clairvoyance
 - 7. One who works under you
 - 12. What happens there
 - 15. Not ingested
 - 16. Got the picture
 - 18. One thousandth of a gram
 - 19. Breakfast item
 - 21. Tall deciduous trees
 - 24. Safe keeping receipt
 - 27. Cowardly
 - 30. Pueblo people of New Mexico
 - 31. Herring-like fish
 - 33. A very large body of water
 - 34. Angle (abbr.)
 - 35. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
 - 37. White clerical vestment
 - 39. Cool!
 - 41. Matchstick games
 - 42. Thick piece of something
 - 44. A state that precedes vomiting
 - 47. Burned item residue
 - 48. Jaguarundi
 - 49. Anno Domini (in the year of Our Lord)
 - 50. The home of "60 Minutes"
 - 52. Dorm official
 - 53. Give cards incorrectly
 - 56. One who is learning the job
 - 61. Popular R.L. Stevenson novel
 - 63. Attentively
 - 64. CNN's founder
 - 65. Criticize
 - CLUES DOWN**
 - 1. Fijian capital
 - 2. Assist
 - 3. Elected lord in Venice
 - 4. The capacity of a physical system to do work
 - 5. People of the wild
 - 6. Parent-teacher groups
 - 7. Midway between south and southeast
 - 8. Moved quickly on foot
 - 9. Handheld Nintendo console
 - 10. "Top of the Stairs" playwright
 - 11. Electronic data processing
 - 12. "Dog Day Afternoon" director
 - 13. Leaned
 - 14. About aviation
 - 17. Mountain is a popular type
 - 22. Lake along Zambia and Congo border
 - 23. Heroic tales
 - 24. Soviet Socialist Republic
 - 25. "Star Trek" villain
 - 26. Hand gesture popular on social media
 - 28. Renters have one
 - 29. Tubular steel column
 - 32. Database management system
 - 36. Similar
 - 38. Providing no shelter or sustenance
 - 40. Death
 - 43. What a sheep did
 - 44. Midcentury Asian battleground
 - 45. Horizontal passage into a mine
 - 46. Mortified
 - 51. Improper word
 - 54. No seats available
 - 55. Financial obligation
 - 56. It can be hot or iced
 - 57. Tough outer skin of a fruit
 - 58. Spumante (Italian wine)
 - 59. Misfortunes
 - 60. Negative
 - 62. Camper

Signs expected to help reduce traffic congestion at the speedway

With a weekend full of racing, drivers should expect an increased volume of traffic in the vicinity of Martinsville Speedway through Sunday, October 29.

For the race being held on Sunday, October 29, the Virginia Department of Transportation encourages race fans driving to and from Martinsville Speedway to follow the recommended traffic patterns listed below and as posted on signs and message boards.

VDOT will place many signs and changeable message boards throughout the region to assist travelers. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic will be heavy. Traffic is being routed to the speedway in certain patterns to minimize overall congestion as much as possible. Watch for the speed limit to reduce gradually from 65 mph to

35 mph on the Route 220/Route 58 Bypass as you approach the speedway.

- From Roanoke and areas north of Martinsville: Race fans traveling south on U.S. 220 should continue on the U.S. 220/U.S. 58 Bypass past the speedway interchange and turn right onto the access road that leads into the speedway. The entrance is located one mile east of the U.S. 220 interchange and may provide easier access. Signs are in place designating the entrance to the speedway.

- From Danville and areas east of Martinsville: Motorists on the U.S. 58 Bypass should follow signs directing them to use the track's back gate. This entrance is located off the bypass, east of the track.

- From Greensboro and areas south of Martinsville: Motorists should watch for

electronic message boards and obey police directing traffic. Through traffic should use the left lane.

- From Stuart and areas west of Martinsville: Motorists should stay on U.S. 58 east and follow signs and message boards to the track.

As drivers exit the races, VDOT reminds drivers of the U.S. 220 Business bridge replacement currently underway. It is located over Reed Creek about 0.4 mile east of the U.S. 220 and U.S. 220 Business intersection. The bridge is reduced to one lane of travel in both directions and may cause delays due to the increase from race traffic.

Those attending the race should closely follow directional information and plan to arrive early and expect heavy traffic and delays throughout the area.

Virginia's Fall Fire Season Begins

The fall fire season has arrived, and from now through November, the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) is urging residents to be extra careful when burning yard debris, enjoying a campfire or backyard fire pit.

Low humidity and windy conditions, along with dry grasses and fallen leaves, combine this time of year to create favorable conditions for wildfires to spark and spread quickly. During years of dry summers — such as this one — wildfires are even more common.

"Most of Virginia had a very dry summer which causes leaves to fall earlier," said DOF Chief of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. "Unfortunately, these factors only improve conditions for wildfires to occur. However, with basic fire safety measures, we can stop most wildfires before they start. It's just like Smokey Bear says, 'Only You Can Prevent Wildfires.'"

In Virginia, more than 75% of wildfires are human caused, with escaped debris burns being the leading cause. DOF has wildland firefighters assigned to every county across the Commonwealth who

work with local fire departments to protect people, property and our natural resources. While the statewide 4 p.m. burn law is only in effect in the spring, be sure to always check with local fire officials in your area for possible regional restrictions or bans.

Take these simple precautions to dramatically reduce the likelihood of a debris burn escaping your control:

- *Avoid burning on dry, windy days

- *Keep your burn pile small

- *Have a rake or shovel and water hose on hand

- *Have a phone ready to call 911 if a fire escapes your control

- *Stay with your fire until it's completely out (drown, stir, ensure it's cool)

- *Consider a "green" alternative to burning yard debris: compost your organic yard waste for your garden or yard

To learn more about the fall fire season in Virginia visit DOF's website and visit Smokey Bear's website for fire prevention tips (including safe yard debris burning) and videos.

Operation Christmas Child National Collection Week is Nov. 13–20

Get ready for an incredible chance to make a global impact and bring boundless joy to children in need. The Operation Christmas Child program, orchestrated with sheer enthusiasm by Samaritan's Purse, is already in full swing. But guess what? It's not too late for you, your church, your organization, your family, or even just you, as an individual, to dive headfirst into this heartwarming mission!

Operation Christmas Child isn't just any program; it's a heartwarming, life-changing experience! It's about delivering tremendous joy and the life-transforming message of Jesus Christ to children around the world, all through the magic of gift-filled shoeboxes. These shoeboxes are more than just gifts; they're an embodiment of God's immense love for each child. For many of these youngsters, it's their very first gift, a moment they'll cherish forever!

Imagine the impact.

With the help of our dedicated local church partners, these shoebox gifts serve as an amazing opportunity to share the Gospel in a way that's fun and engaging for kids. It's about planting seeds of hope and faith in young hearts, and you can be a part of it.

Samaritan's Purse has been doing this incredible work for years, and the numbers speak for themselves. Since 1993, we've reached over 209 million children in more than 170 countries and territories. That's an astonishing number of smiles, all made possible through your generosity. Not only do these gifts bring immense joy, but they also convey a powerful message of God's love, creating a bond that transcends borders.

But here's the best part - YOU can be a part of this heartwarming journey! You can put together these special shoebox gifts, whether on your

own, with a group of friends, or even online. And when your boxes are ready, it's as simple as taking them to the nearest drop-off location. There are multiple locations throughout the region, and we've made it super convenient for you.

Get ready to be part of a global movement that spreads love, joy, and hope to children in need. Your involvement can make a world of difference, and the smiles you help create will warm your heart. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity to make the world a brighter place for these children. Check out the drop-off locations and schedules below, and let's make this holiday season unforgettable for kids around the world.

For more information, including How to Pack a Shoebox (/operation-christmas-child/pack-ashoe-box/), visit [samaritanaspurse.org/occ](https://www.samaritanaspurse.org/occ) (<https://www.samaritanaspurse.org/>).

Please contact Penny Denny (276) 340-8984 or Matt Tatum (276) 226-0805 with any questions or to learn how to get involved locally.

Shoebox Drop off Locations in Henry County:

Bassett - Blackberry Baptist Church, 3241 Stones Dairy Road Bassett:

Mon., Nov. 13, 5 – 7 p.m.; Tues., Nov. 14, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.; Wed., Nov. 15, 5 – 8 p.m.; Thurs., Nov. 16, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.; Fri., Nov. 17: 5 – 7 p.m.; Sat., Nov. 18: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Sun., Nov. 19: 1-3 p.m.; Mon., Nov. 20, 8 – 10 a.m.

Collinsville - Stone Memorial Christian Church 3030 Virginia Avenue Collinsville:

Mon., Nov. 13, 4 – 6 p.m.; Tues., Nov. 14, 4 – 6 p.m.; Wed., Nov. 15, 4 – 6 p.m.; Thurs., Nov. 16, 4 – 6 p.m.; Fri., Nov. 17, 4 – 6 p.m.; Sat., Nov. 18, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.;

Sun., Nov. 19, 4 – 6 p.m.; Mon., Nov. 20, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Martinsville - Chatham Heights Baptist Church, 1235 Chatham Heights Road, Martinsville:

Mon., Nov. 13, 3 – 5 p.m.; Tues., Nov. 14, 3 – 5 p.m.; Wed., Nov. 15, 3 – 5 p.m.; Thurs., Nov. 16, 3 – 5 p.m.; Fri., Nov. 17, 3 – 5 p.m.; Sat., Nov. 18, 1 – 4 p.m.; Sun., Nov. 19, 1 – 4 p.m.; Mon., Nov. 20, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Ridgeway - Horsepasture Christian Church, 1146 Horsepasture Price Road, Ridgeway:

Mon., Nov. 13, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Tues., Nov. 14, 5 – 7 p.m.; Wed., Nov. 15, 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Thurs., Nov. 16, 5 – 7 p.m.; Fri., Nov. 17, 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Sat., Nov. 18, 9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Sun., Nov. 19, 5 – 7 p.m.; Mon., Nov. 20, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Shoebox Drop off

Locations in Patrick County:

Stuart - Nettle Ridge Church, 70 Nettle Ridge Loop, Stuart:

Mon., Nov. 13, 5 – 7 p.m.; Tues., Nov. 14, 4 – 6 p.m.; Wed., Nov. 15, 7 – 9 p.m.; Thurs., Nov. 16, 5 – 7 p.m.; Fri., Nov. 17, 5 – 7 p.m.; Sat., Nov. 18, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Sun., Nov. 19, 1 – 5 p.m.; Mon., Nov. 20, 8 – 10 a.m.

Minnies Chapel, 161 Minnies Chapel Loop, Stuart:

Mon., Nov. 13, 6 – 8 p.m.; Tues., Nov. 14, 6 – 8 p.m.; Wed., Nov. 15, 6 – 8 p.m.; Thurs., Nov. 16, 6 – 8 p.m.; Fri., Nov. 17, 6 – 8 p.m.; Sat., Nov. 18, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.; Sun., Nov. 19, 1 – 4 p.m.; Mon., Nov. 20, 8 – 10 a.m.

There also are drop off locations in Franklin County. Call Penny Denny (276) 340-8984 or Tatum (276) 226-0805 for additional information.

Board

from page 1

- Accepted a donation of approximately 120 acres of land, and its associated personal property, from EIDP, Inc. The land surrounds the Henry County Adult Detention Center and Public Safety headquarters, and is currently being leased by the county.

- Purchased approximately 7.5 acres adjacent to Fieldale Park for \$11,775. The Textile Heritage Trail is located on this property.

- Approved an additional appropriation of \$3,094,088 received from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management for the purchase of 12 emergency generators, and awarded site-specific contracts to Fidelity Power Systems, of Henrico, Va., for the purchases.

- Approved a donation of \$25,000 received from the family and friends of Randolph Tyler Stone. The donation will help fund the preliminary work for Phase 7 of the Dick and Willie Passage.

- Awarded a contract in the amount of \$118,926 to Sheehy Ford for three police interceptor utility vehicles for the Sheriff's Office. • Approved an additional appropriation of \$31,911 received from the Department of Justice for the purchase of bulletproof vests for the Sheriff's Office.

- Approved an additional appropriation of \$32,400 received from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles grant for traffic enforcement by the Sheriff's Office. • Approved an additional appropriation of \$5,876 received from state asset forfeiture funds for the purchase of replacement office furniture for the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office.

- Approved an additional appropriation of \$65,000 received from a Virginia Department of Emergency

Management grant for stipends for 911 center employees. • Approved an additional appropriation of \$3,000 received from a Virginia Department of Emergency Management grant for GIS software.

- Approved a contract with Fidelity Power Systems in the amount of \$225,615 for the purchase and installation of emergency generators at the Oak Level and 10th Street, Fieldale water booster pump stations.

- Approved a contract with Shoulder Run Nutrient Bank in the amount of \$90,000 to purchase the phosphorous credits necessary for grading Lot #2 at Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre.

- Selected Joe Bryant as Henry County's voting representative at the 2023 Virginia Association of Counties Annual Business Meeting. Garrett Dillard was selected as the county's alternate voting representative.

- Conducted a public hearing and approved a request to rezone approximately 5.6 acres of the Blackberry District from Rural Residential District (R-R) to Agricultural District (A-1). The applicant wishes to continue keeping chickens on the property.

- Conducted a public hearing and approved a request to rezone approximately 12.5 acres of the Blackberry District from Rural Residential District (R-R) to Agricultural District (A-1). The applicant wishes to market the property for potential agricultural purposes.

- Conducted a public hearing and approved a request to rezone approximately 3.42 acres of the Blackberry District from Mixed Residential District (M-R) to Agricultural District (A-1). The applicant wishes to build acces-



The Henry County Board of Supervisors approved granting additional real estate tax relief for certain elderly, disabled, and handicapped individuals at a Tuesday meeting.

sory structures on the property larger than what is allowed under its previous zoning.

- Conducted a public hearing and denied a request to rezone approximately 1.79 acres of the Reed Creek District from Industrial District (I-1) to Commercial District (B-1). The applicant wished to establish a restaurant in the existing building.

- Reappointed Richard Hall, Terry Cundiff, Nubby Coleman, and Gary Gibson to the Patriot Centre/CCBC Advisory Board for two-year terms set to expire on December 31, 2025.

- *Approved the items of consent as presented.

- *Heard the monthly report on the delinquent tax collection efforts.

- *Heard an update from the Martinsville-Henry County Economic

Development Corporation.

- *Approved designating Joe Bryant, of the Collinsville District, as the voting representative and Garrett Dillard, of the Iriswood District, as the alternate for the 2023 Virginia Association of Counties (VACO) annual business meeting.

- *Heard from Information Systems Director Mark Alley about cyber security.

- *Heard from Doug Stegall, of the Collinsville District, about the need for an overhead warning light at the intersection of Colonial Drive and Kings Mountain Road.

- Set a public hearing for Nov. 28, to consider a siting agreement with Rocky Ford Solar.

Bassett man held with no bond

A Henry County Sheriff's Office deputy was traveling southbound on Greensboro Road, near Sheetz at 11:38 a.m. on October 20, when the deputy observed a 2017 beige Ford Fusion perform an illegal lane change and drive recklessly. The deputy activated his emergency equipment to conduct a traffic stop on the vehicle. The Ford Fusion accelerated away, and a pursuit ensued.

The pursuit traveled down Greensboro Road for several miles before turning around at a cross-

over. The pursuit then traveled northbound on Greensboro Road for a short distance before turning back around on Greensboro Road, where it started going southbound for a second time. The driver of the Ford Fusion eventually stopped the vehicle on Greensboro Road, near White House Road. The driver of the vehicle was taken into custody without incident.

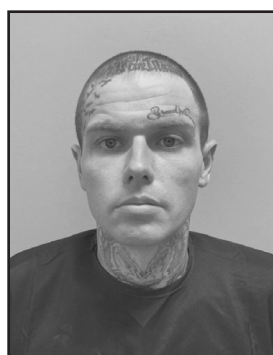
Charles Levi Goins, 30, of 100 Ridgeview Ln., Apt. 1, Bassett, was wanted by Pulaski County, Virginia, for probation vio-

lation, with the underlying charges being two counts of distribution of narcotics, eluding police, and burglary.

In addition, he was charged with felony eluding law enforcement officer and fail to obey highway lane

and is currently being held in the Henry County Adult Detention Center with no bond.

This investigation is ongoing, anyone having information regarding this incident is asked to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at 276-638-



Charles Levi Goins

8751 or Crimestoppers at 63-CRIME (632-7463). The Crimestoppers Program offers rewards up to \$2,500 for information related to crime.

Career Academy, county schools, designated as an Apple Distinguished School



Henry County Schools' Career Academy was recognized as an Apple Distinguished School for the 2023-2026 program term, based on its commitment to continuous innovation

in education and using Apple products to create exemplary learning practices.

"Our goal at Career Academy is to give our students an academic advantage, whether entering college, the work force, or military. The use of Apple products and services in our classrooms allows students to become innovative and competitive leaders ready for the challenges that await them upon graduating from high school."

Apple Distinguished Schools are recognized as some of the most innovative in the world. They're centers of leadership and educational excellence, with a clear vision for how technology-rich environments support learning goals. In Apple Distinguished Schools, forward-thinking leaders and their communities work to inspire, imagine, and impact teaching and learning, and they have documented results of academic accomplish-

ments.

Schools all over the world are using iPad and Mac to transform learning. As teachers incorporate technology into their lessons, they empower students to lead, learn, and thrive, to discover new opportunities, and to make their world a better place.

Career Academy will be recognized for this accomplishment at the November 2 School Board Meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Halloween

from page 1

Around the early 1930s, some historians surmise, American children developed trick-or-treating by coming up with the idea of offering adults the opportunity to be spared pranks for the price of treats. Other historians theorize that it was the adults who came up with the idea: Distract the kids from pulling off tricks by offering them treats instead, to leave them alone.

The 1930s to the 1960s were truly the golden age of trick-or-treating: Kids roamed the street prepared for both carrying out tricks and receiving treats – depending on whether the adults at each house bought them off with sweets or failed to do so.

The kids ran the show during those decades of trick-or-treating. It was a

unique night controlled by children, which the adults tolerated (or complained about).

In the 1960s, community and neighborhood Halloween parties became popular, in one sense as a way to keep the kids too busy having fun to wander about pulling off tricks. Churches got into the Halloween game too, having parties and later trunk-or-treating, to have kids off the street and in the church. Costumes may have been ghoulish and scary on the street, but in the churches, they were encouraged to be of Bible characters.

Nowadays, trick-or-treating has degenerated into little more than a hedonistic grab for as much candy as possible without any of the accompanying friendly

chats with one's own neighbors which the night used to entail.

While their own neighborhoods remain dark and ignored, parents will drive their kids around to the wealthier areas where it is assumed copious amounts of candy would be given. At churches on various nights, starting Saturday, kids will go from car to car loading up their bags. In uptown Martinsville on Halloween night, kids will get their candy from merchants from 4-6 p.m. In Stuart, it'll be from 5:30-8 p.m. on Main Street that same night.

When my daughter was little, I kept to the old ways, walking her from house to house. She was small and the yards were big, so we'd only make five or six houses before she was worn

out. At each house we had enjoyable visits with neighbors who were seeing her grow up.

On Saturday, my now-teen daughter and I will be handing out candy at our church's Trunk-or-Treat. On Tuesday, I'll be among those handing out candy at the Historic Henry County Courthouse from 4-6 p.m. And if we can manage to do two things at once, I'll also bring her to her dance teacher's house in Franklin County where Halloween fun – including trick-or-treating in generous neighborhoods – is promised.

After all, times and traditions always change. Fifty years from now, or 100, trunk-or-treating and neighborhood candy raids may just be items in the history columns.

9th

from page 1

When it comes to electricity, AI could be used by utilities and wholesale market makers to continuously pinpoint when to dispatch power plants and help power plant managers balance supply and demand. It can also monitor utility polls for any issues, order needed parts, or create work orders for when technicians are needed to go into the field to fix something.

However, a drawback to the implementation of AI in our energy sector is that operating AI requires data centers to use massive amounts of power. According to the International Energy Agency, data centers globally used 1-1.3% of global electricity demand in 2022. According to one of our witnesses, Loudoun County, Virginia, would need the equivalent of three large nuclear plants every year to power new AI enabled data centers.

As AI use grows, so will its electricity demand. With electrical grids already under pressure and stressed for more capacity, and with the Biden Administration determined to eliminate the fossil fuels which stabilize our electrical grid, we will have to find a way to ensure that AI doesn't further strain our grid.

Another challenge is the risk of AI-assisted cyber-attacks. An ever-increasing issue in our world, it will be paramount as we move forward

with AI development, that we find meaningful ways to protect our energy sector against this threat.

Medical Devices Must Work

Ten to 15 million medical devices are used by U.S. hospitals and doctor's offices daily to help diagnosis and treat patients.

Unfortunately, some of these medical devices are sold with manufacturer-imposed restrictions on repairs, meaning only the manufacturer itself can make a repair. Articles that I have seen include among those devices CT scanners, EKG machines, MRI machines, and ventilators.

Restrictions on who can repair a medical device can come with potentially deadly consequences. This is especially true in rural areas, like the 9th District of Virginia. In rural areas, having a repair person nearby is less likely. Being forced to use only the manufacturer's representative could mean longer wait times for hospital and doctor's office equipment to be repaired.

If your doctor and/or health care team don't have access to working equipment, they can not properly diagnose your condition or disease. This can lead to catastrophic consequences.

I cannot accept that people could become more ill or risk death because they are unable to receive help due to

repair restrictions. Medical devices save lives. Manufacturers cannot in good conscious stand in the way of the mission to treat people.

That is why I am looking at the concept of allowing independent contractors to be able to repair the equipment for hospitals and doctor's offices who request that service. We are checking with our local hospitals about their needs.

This issue reminds me of my friend, Bill Bradley, who unfortunately passed away in 2017. He started Valley Biomedical Services, to service medical devices in need of repair. Bill started the company working out of a van and grew it into a success, working hard to provide a variety of medical repair services in the Roanoke area and beyond for over 30 years.

Ending manufacturer restrictions could benefit skilled technicians like my friend Bill, while also, and more importantly, providing better access to health care in rural areas.

When facing life or death issues, you should neither have to wait for the repair team to fly in nor have the patient travel to another hospital.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, call my Abingdon office at 276-525-1405, my Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671, or to reach my office via email, visit www.morgangriffith.house.gov.

Homicide investigation underway

The Martinsville-Henry County 911 Communication Center received a call at 7:28 a.m. on October 23 to conduct a well-being check at 84 Summit View Drive, Apartment 1, Martinsville. Deputies from the Henry County Sheriff's Office responded to the scene. Upon arrival, they entered the apartment, where they located a deceased man inside the residence. The man was identified as Michael Jerome Hairston, 46. He resided at this apartment.

Authorities determined that Hairston arrived home on October 21, at approximately 5:12 p.m. At approximately 7:08 p.m., two people arrived and appeared to go inside the apartment at 84 Summit View Drive. Several minutes later, both people – which appear to be a man and a woman -- are seen running from the apartment. This was recorded on a neighbor's doorbell camera.

On the night this incident occurred, the owner of the doorbell camera called at 7:20

p.m. and reported that two juveniles were outside messing with her apartment and possibly tried to damage her door. Two deputies responded to the apartment complex and spoke to the neighbor through her doorbell camera. They checked the apartment complex and then left the complex after not finding damage to any doors.

Hairston's body has been transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Roanoke, Virginia, where an autopsy will be performed to determine the cause and manner of death.

This investigation is ongoing, 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. The nature of the crime and the substance of the information determine the amount of reward paid.

Warner

from page 1

to enhance border enforcement, management, and security. The situation at our border is complex, and it will take continued leadership and funding to stem the flow of illicit drugs like fentanyl, smuggling, and transnational criminal organizations that operate along our border," the letter stated.

Also noted is the increase in overdose deaths, "particularly among young people. In total, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that more than 112,000 people died from a drug overdose between May 2022 and May 2023, with fentanyl and other synthetic opioids causing the vast majority of overdoses," the letter stated.

Additionally, "a new analysis reported in September 2023, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Arizona, Nevada, and Virginia were among the 37 states in which accidental drug overdoses were the largest cause of death for people under 40-years-old in 2022. In Montana, accidental overdoses of young people under 40 increased by 121% from 2018 to 2022," the letter stated.

It adds the increasing rates of overdose deaths "are clearly being driven, in part, by fentanyl trafficking across our border."

From FY 2019 to FY 2022, CBP seizures of fentanyl nearly tripled. So far in FY 2023, CBP has already seized over 25,000 pounds of fentanyl. In March, it was reported that CBP seized more than 21 million fentanyl tablets in the Nogales, AZ port of entry over the previous five months—more than the number of tablets seized during the entire previous year.

Highlighting the complex situation that CBP must navigate when seizing fentanyl, officials have indicated that individuals are smuggling pills inside seat cushions, car batteries, metal walkers, and even hollowed-out bicycle frames. CBP data also has shown that drugs are overwhelmingly being smuggled through U.S. ports of entry—particularly in Arizona and California—and "we must do more to ensure that our CBP Officers have the funding, tools, and technology necessary to be able to stop this surge of fentanyl into our country," it added.

"Strengthening our southwest border is not only vital to our national security but also our public health," Warner and the others wrote. "To achieve this, we must prioritize additional funding for the Department of Homeland Security for its critical border security operations, including funding construction and infrastructure improvements at our ports of entry. We also urge you to invest funding to hire additional CBP Officers, increase processing and screening capacity at ports of entry along the border, engage in a wide range of counter-drug activities, and acquire additional non-intrusive inspection technology to substantially increase the number of passenger cars and cargo that are scanned at the border.

"This border security technology will provide CBP Officers with more tools to support their mission and more frequently interdict fentanyl and other illicit drugs. These types of technology and resources will provide CBP with enhanced capabilities to detect the transport of illicit drugs, contraband, invasive species, and other dangers in inbound and outbound cargo at ports of entry," it added.

For years, we have voted to enact additional funding to address the complex challenges at our southwest border by focusing on smart security measures and enhanced technology. We continue to support strong investments in border security measures that will keep our Nation safer and increase the capacity, personnel, and technology that are available to enhance the security of our border," the letter concluded.

Auditions set for "Hospitality Suite"

Auditions for "Hospitality Suite," an internationally renowned stage play will be held at the Blackbox Theatre, 44 Franklin Street, UPTown Martinsville, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on October 28.

The play is about three men who work for an industrial-lubricants firm promoting their wares at a convention hospitality suite in Wichita, Kansas.

Roles include PHIL, an aging account manager who has recently begun to question his life and work;

LARRY, a quick-witted salesman with a no-holds-barred tongue and absolute contempt for dishonesty, and BOB, a devout young hire from the company research center, on hand to represent technical expertise.

Their sights are set on the head of a large manufacturing firm whose favor could save their ailing company, and as the evening

unfolds, unspoken differences between them become lines in the sand and ultimately spark a final battle that lays bare their hearts and leaves no soul unscathed.

Reader's theater is a style of theater in which the actors present dramatic readings of narrative material without costumes, props, scenery, or special lighting. Actors use only scripts and vocal expression to help the audience understand the story. Reader's theater is also known as "theater of the mind," "interpreters' theater," and "story theater."

Reader's Theatre is a great way to "test the waters" to see how you like live theatre (little or no acting experience required), but experienced actors are always welcome.

Performance Dates are November 10 & 11.

For additional information, email info@TWCP.net.

Corrections employee arrested after contraband search

A Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) employee has been arrested after a search of their personal vehicle resulted in the seizure of several contraband items.

VADOC Intelligence Staff received intelligence that an employee would be attempting to bring contraband into Sussex I State Prison on Tuesday, October 17.

At approximately 6:45 p.m. on October 17, the employee arrived at the facility and was escorted to a separate room for questioning. During questioning, the employee confessed

to meeting an inmate's aunt in Roanoke to pick up cell phones, which are considered contraband in VADOC facilities.

The employee consented to a search of their vehicle and staff found contraband concealed in an article of clothing. In total, staff found nine cell phones, five packages of tobacco, a package of cell phone charging adapters, two cell phone SIM cards, one pair of earbuds, tobacco wrapping papers and four additional charging cords.

The Sussex County Sheriff's Office was notified of the inci-

dent and arrested the employee.

"There is a zero tolerance policy towards drugs and contraband at our facilities," said VADOC Director Chadwick Dotson. "This applies to both inmates and employees. Employees who are found to have contraband and are attempting to smuggle these items into our facility will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

This is an active investigation. No further information will be released until the investigation is complete.

'Access and hesitancy': Why vaccine fatigue is increasing

By Hollyann Purvis
Capital News Service

The majority of Virginians are not up-to-date with the latest COVID-19 vaccine due to vaccine fatigue, something that has medical experts concerned with a looming triple threat of respiratory viruses.

Less than 20% of Virginians are

up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations, according to the Virginia Department of Health. This number is a large decrease from the 74% of individuals vaccinated with the primary series of shots. The vaccine is updated, like the flu shot, to handle new variants.

Vaccine fatigue occurs when the public loses interest in vaccines in gen-

eral, according to Gonzalo Bearman, chief of infectious diseases at Virginia Commonwealth University.

"I'm seeing that in the clinic, with fewer people interested in discussing vaccines at times, and whether it's COVID vaccines, flu vaccines, or even RSV vaccines," Bearman said.

People whose vaccines have lapsed are more susceptible to current strains that

are circulating, according to Bearman.

"This is a particularly alarming trend because we have increasing COVID-19 activity in the community right now," Bearman said.

Vaccine fatigue can be attributed to many factors, including a mistrust of science and misinformation on the

See **Vaccines**, page 10

Supervisors

from page 1

Martin noted that in September, County Administrator Dale Wagoner presented "a study for the county employees with a recommendation for a raise, which they were given. That's great, I love it when anybody gets a raise, but at this point, I hadn't heard anybody address the school compensation for the teachers."

For that, she said the county took \$100,000 from federal loan assistance and travel contingency funds and \$397,000 from interest income from the jail construction account.

"Which I would have thought that would have went to pay down the taxpayer's debt on the jail, but if you want to give folks raises with that that's great, but include your teachers," she said.

Martin said she didn't know whether there is a lack of communication between the two boards or if it's just something "nobody's gonna fool with. Lord knows, I hope that's not the case.

"I have a lot of teachers asking me to come here tonight and ask the question why hasn't it been addressed, and is it going to be addressed, is it going to be presented by Mr. Wagoner, or do we need to have the school administration come in and present it. But somebody needs to tell the school system and teachers one way or another," Martin said.

She asked if the board was going to consider the recommendations or if there would be no discussion and the matter just goes away.

"I'm not ready to accept that we don't have any money because we found money for the county

raises. I'm not knocking that, I'm happy the county got raises, but they found \$497,000 to do the initial implementation for the county raises," she said.

The study, Martin said, recommended a 5.3 percent to six percent increase for teachers. Teachers who had 30 or more years of teaching would get a little more than that to make them comparable to the surrounding areas.

She added there's not been any discussion from the board that she's been aware of, at least not publicly.

Wagoner said he spoke with School Superintendent Dr. Amy Blake-Lewis about the pay study.

"She conveyed to me that the school system has not fairly vetted their study recommendations. Her pay study impacts 432 employees," he said.

County staff spent thousands of hours going through the recommendations to make sure they were accurate, the market data was compared to localities it should be compared to, and the many factors that go into a compensation study, Wagoner said.

"As you know there was quite a bit of transition in the school system with the superintendent and assistant superintendent," he said. Blake-Lewis "simply told me they had not had the resources and time to adequately vet that compensation study and come back with a recommendation."

To his knowledge, Wagoner said the school board has also not taken any action on the school's compensation money.

"I think it would be premature at this point to action on a school-related matter before the school

board ever takes action on it," he said.

Henry County Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Administrative Services Dr. Benjamin Boone said the results of the study weren't released until the end of May, the beginning of June.

"At that time, our budget for this fiscal year was already developed. We actually had to bring the budget back to you all in early July with the skinny budget that was passed," he said.

The teachers and employees all received a 7 percent raise at that time for this fiscal year at the time, Boone said.

"As we look for our budget for next year, we are using the salary study as a tool and resource as we develop our budget for next year and look at compensation for teachers and employees," he said.

Noting the county's school system, and having a strong school system, is the backbone of the county's economic development, Martin said, "This should be as high of a priority on your list of things to do as getting cops in here. We have got to keep them at a good pay scale."

Martin believes there needs to be better communication and transparency between the school board and the board of supervisors.

"I'm hoping that in the very near future, we're going to hear some discussion from this board concerning the compensation study and what it recommended for the Henry County School teachers because I'm very disappointed that it hasn't even been mentioned," she said.

Your Community, Your Voice
Serving Henry County, Martinsville, and Surrounding Areas

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

henrycountyenterprise.com

Weekly Publication
Published Each Saturday

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

Wendi Craig, Advertising Manager
advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com
(276) 340-2445

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

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

Movie Town 276-638-4040

NOW PLAYING:
Five Nights at Freddy's (PG-13),
Nightmare Before Christmas (PG),
Taylor Swift Eras Tour,
Saw X (R),
The Exorcist Believer (R),
and Paw Patrol (PG)

Coming Soon: 11/10 - The Marvels (PG-13)

<http://www.movietowntheatre.com>
or call for showtimes (276) 632-7400

21 BTW

FAMILY FUN NIGHT

OCTOBER 31, 6-9PM

BASSETT FIRE DEPARTMENT

MUSIC BY **dj r.seay**

BOUNCY HOUSE BY **KING KIDZ**

SPONSORED BY
BASSETT FIRE DEPARTMENT, BASSETT INDUSTRIES, BASSETT FUNERAL HOME, PAPA'S PIZZA,
SHIVELY ELECTRIC, AUTOSBYNELSON, JERRY'S PIZZA, MARTINSVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
MARTINSVILLE FIRST SAVINGS BANK (BTW21)

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@americantower.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.

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

Researchers analyze COVID-19's impact on motorist behavior after rise in traffic fatalities

The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on roadway safety nationwide.

Data scientists presented theoretical reasons for this at September's DRIVE SMART Virginia Distracted Driving Summit, held in Blacksburg and partially sponsored by Virginia Farm Bureau.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported the largest six-month increase ever recorded, when over 20,000 people died in motor vehicle crashes in the first half of 2021, up a staggering 18.4% over 2020.

Though lockdowns reduced traffic density, social capital deteriorated, and a dominant demographic of bored motorists used open roads for riskier driving.

Bryan E. Porter, associate dean and professor of psychology at the Old Dominion University Graduate School, shared a big-picture overview on how COVID-19 impacted U.S. motorists.

He said economic recessions historically have resulted in lower traffic fatalities, until COVID-19.

"When the U.S. loses money,

they actually save lives on the road," he said. "It's a correlation we've seen time and time again. Now look at 2020 when COVID occurred. This is the first time during a recession where roadway deaths did not drop but increased."

In Virginia, 973 people died in traffic-related accidents in 2021, a 14.5% increase over 2020.

Though U.S. fatality rates stabilized in 2022, Porter said, "We're nowhere near recovery, but may be hitting the threshold."

In global comparisons, he noted that Sweden's roads were safer through the pandemic.

"They were a natural experiment," Porter said. "But what did they do differently? They did not shut down and remained fully open. We can talk about their COVID rates—that's fair—but they had improvements in traffic deaths."

Data scientist Nicholas Ward discussed psychological theories and influences that may explain COVID-19's behavioral impacts, like seatbelt negligence and speeding.

AAA data shows the traditional driving population changed during the pandemic, as "older, safer people" stayed home, and younger, typically male drivers took to roads for essential work.

Changes in social capital—how strongly we feel connected to each other and the community—also contributed to fatalities.

"Data shows communities with stronger social capital have a better traffic safety record because you feel connected to people sharing the road with you," he said. "There is evidence to show that during COVID, attachment to social groups changed to focusing on immediate family."

Lockdown boredom was another psychological factor, Ward said.

"People try to regain excitement in their life when they are bored," he explained, adding that those directly impacted by the illness exhibited intensified boredom. "To offset that, they saw more benefits to taking risks, and did it when they could on the road!"

Danville among localities to receive federal grant

The Virginia Additive Manufacturing and Applied Materials Strategy Development Consortium of the New River Valley and Danville was awarded a Strategic Development Grant, which will go towards advancing a regional strategy based in the New River Valley to develop and deploy additive manufacturing system technologies for heavy industry to re-shore manufacturing and to strengthen domestic supply chain resilience.

U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner, D-Alexandria, and Tim Kaine, D-Richmond, recently announced that the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) selected two projects in Virginia as part of the first phase of EDA's Regional Tech Hubs Program.

The other project to receive an award is the Advanced Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Tech Hub in the Richmond/

Petersburg region.

The Tech Hubs Program, made possible by the CHIPS and Science Act, bipartisan legislation strongly supported by both senators, aims to strengthen U.S. economic and national security by investing in regions across the country that have the assets, resources, and potential to become globally competitive innovation centers focused on the technologies and industries of the future. Specifically, this U.S. Department of Commerce program brings together diverse public, private, and academic partners into collaborative consortia focused on driving inclusive regional growth. With their existing innovation assets as a foundation, these Tech Hubs are envisioned to build the workforce of the future, enable businesses to start and scale, and deploy and deliver critical and emerging technologies.

Have a boo-tiful Halloween with fire safety in mind

As Halloween creeps closer, the National Fire Protection Association* (NFPA) is reminding the public that fire safety hazards often lurk among spooky decorations and festivities. With these potential risks in mind, the association encourages everyone to take simple precautions that can help ensure a festive, fun, safe holiday.

"From decorating with jack-o-lanterns and other seasonal items to costume parties and trick-or-treating, many hallmarks of Halloween can present potential fire hazards," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of Outreach and Advocacy at NFPA. "Fortunately, the vast majority of these risks can be prevented with a little added awareness and caution."

According to NFPA data, candles accounted for an annual average of 7,400 home fires, result-

ing in 90 deaths, 670 injuries and \$291 million in direct property damage between 2015 and 2019. In addition, an annual average of 790 home structure fires began with decorations, causing one civilian fire death, 26 civilian fire injuries, and \$13 million in direct property damage; more than two of every five (44 percent) of these fires occurred when decorations were placed too close to a heat source, such as a candle or hot equipment.

NFPA offers these tips and guidelines for enjoying a boo-tiful and fire-safe Halloween:

Decorations: Many common decorations like cornstalks, crepe paper, and dried flowers are very flammable. Keep these and similar decorations far away from any open flames or heat sources, like candles, heaters, and light bulbs.

Candles: Using candles as decoration can be risky if not done correctly. Keep them in a well-attended area out of the path of potential trick-or-treaters. Remind children of the dangers of open flames, and make sure they are always supervised when candles are lit. Always extinguish candles before leaving an area.

Jack-o-lanterns: Glow sticks or electric candles are the safest choice when it comes to lighting up your jack-o-lantern, but if you choose to use a real candle, do so with extreme caution. Light a candle inside a jack-o-lantern using long fireplace matches or a utility lighter and keep it away from other decorations.

Costumes: Avoid fabric that billows or trails behind you, as these can easily ignite. If you are making your own

costume, avoid loosely woven fabrics like linen and cotton, which can be very flammable.

Visibility: Give children flashlights or glow sticks for lighting, these can even be incorporated into the costume. If your child has a mask, ensure the eye holes are large enough for them to see clearly.

Smoke Alarms: This is a great time to make sure your smoke alarms are in working order.

Exits: Exits are NOT an appropriate place for decorations. When decorating, ensure that nothing is blocking escape routes, including doors and windows.

Visit the NFPA Halloween safety page for more resources of how to stay safe. For more Halloween fire safety for kids and families, visit www.sparkyschoolhouse.org and www.sparky.org.

Make Your Home Cyber Safe

When we think about cybersecurity we may think about computers and smart phones. But the reality is everything from our TVs to thermostats to appliances are potentially vulnerable to hackers. In this new normal, online safety is a must so remember - smart devices need smart security.

When setting up a new web-enabled device, be sure to review the privacy and security settings to minimize who you are sharing your data with. If your new device is Wi-Fi and Bluetooth enabled, but they don't need to be, turn off those settings. Finally, make sure you change the password on your internet router when you first set it up, and regularly thereafter, using a strong and unique password each time.

The AARP Fraud Watch Network is a free resource for all. Learn how to proactively spot scams or get guidance if you've been targeted. Visit www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork or call our dedicated helpline to speak to a fraud specialist at 1-877-908-3360

Expiration of covid-era funding creates rocky future for Virginia child care

Some Virginia child care facilities face an uncertain future with the September expiration of pandemic-era relief funding. Additionally, a recent report found facilities are understaffed and child care is unaffordable for many Virginia families, especially those with young children.

An estimated 88,265 kids in Virginia will lose their child care, according to The Century Foundation, a progressive think tank. An estimated 1,383 programs could close and 2,861 child care workers will lose their jobs.

Places like L & E Bright Future Child Day Center in Virginia Beach are in financial limbo.

Owner Elizabeth Oppong received past government funding, and said she's still struggling to keep the doors open. Her situation will be worse without federal funding, she said.

Oppong can't afford to hire more teachers, she said. That also means she cannot enroll new students, because there are state protocols for teacher to student ratios in day cares. She loses money every day, but there is a demand for her services.

"I get parents calling me every day," she said. "I do have spots, but I don't have a teacher yet."

Oppong, a single mother, opened her day care to help low income families access affordable child care, something she didn't have.

"Half your paycheck is going to day care," Oppong said. "When we opened the day care we decided to open a day care that's affordable."

Most of her clients use social services funding. Her rate can't increase unless the social services rate increases, she said. Oppong can't offset costs, which have seen "a big jump."

"My rent increases 3% every year," she said. "The bills continue to increase; I have gone from \$9 an hour to \$14 an hour to my staff."

Child care centers were stabilized during the pandemic with \$24 billion from the 2021

American Rescue Plan. Day cares used funds to keep doors open despite lower enrollment rates and the increased cost of operations. There was an additional \$15 billion injected to the Child Care and Development Fund.

It is estimated the program helped 220,000 child care providers nationwide, saved approximately 9.6 million child care slots and more than 1 million child care jobs.

Almost 5,000 child care programs in 96% of Virginia counties received a portion of funding, which impacted up to 317,500 children. Almost 3,000 centers used funds to pay for personnel costs and staffing, according to the Virginia ARP Child Care Stabilization Fact Sheet.

More than 2,100 child facilities operated out of homes used stabilization payments to make rent and mortgage payments, typically their largest expense.

Maria-Isabel Ballivian is the executive director of the Annandale Christian Community for Action Child Development Center. The center has the capacity to serve 290 children, but has only 187 enrolled. This is mainly due to staff retention. The center has lost potential staff to the school system because it can't compete with the wages schools provide, Ballivian said.

This directly impacts the quality of care the center is able to provide, she said. An increased number of enrolled children now have developmental delays, particularly speech delays, as a direct result of the pandemic and isolation during critical development, Ballivian said.

"Now early childhood programs like ACCA that are high quality, that provide an inclusive environment for children with special needs, are being forced to do a lot more with a lot less," she said.

Congress called on Biden in August to invest \$16 billion to keep the Child Care Stabilization

Fund program going. The end of the program will only worsen the crisis, the letter stated.

Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., who signed the letter, is cosponsor on a bill to extend the fund. Versions of the Child Care Stabilization Act have been introduced in the House and Senate.

Kaine held a video call with the press in late September to discuss short-term solutions to the national budget.

"I am hopeful that in that deal we will include the same kind of robust increases for child care funding that we were able to get in last year's budget," Kaine said.

Federal lawmakers have until Nov. 17 to pass a budget.

A Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission report on Oct. 16 found child care is unaffordable for many Virginia families, especially those with young children. Child care costs throughout Virginia surpass 10% of the median income. The federal government defines affordable child care costs at 7% or less of household income.

The demand for child care in Virginia beats out the availability, with at least 140,000 more slots needed to fill the gap, according to the report.

The JLARC report focused on the state's TANF, SNAP and Child Care Subsidy Programs. JLARC estimated 25,000 less children will have access to subsidized care when state program funding expires next year.

Virginia needs to keep expanded child care funding in place, the commission recommended. It outlined several other legislative and executive actions that could improve access to child care.

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.



Carlisle School's Zip Zap Zop Theatre Company creates a human tunnel for children at a Preschool in the Galleries performance.

Wide range of programs and classes for young children offered

Piedmont Arts unveiled its schedule of events for 2023-24, with classes and programming for young students again among the listings.

Preschool in the Galleries is a series of programs for pre-K students designed to foster a love of the performing and visual arts at a young age. A 9:30 a.m. show and a 10:30 a.m. show will take place on each date.

Martinsville High School's Jazz Band will perform on Thursday, Nov. 16.

Storytelling Santa and the Campbell Court Choir will perform on Wednesday, Dec. 13.

Carlisle School's Zip

Zap Zop Theatre Co. will perform on Wednesday, Feb. 7.

Martinsville High School's Jazz Band will perform on Wednesday, March 13.

Carlisle School's Zip Zap Zop Theatre Co. will perform on Tuesday, April 23.

Performances are free of charge to students and schools and feature performers from various arts organizations and schools in Martinsville and Henry County. Contact Christiana Jarrett at CJarrett@PiedmontArts.org to reserve a spot for your child or class.

In addition to this pro-

gramming, Wee Create! is back at Piedmont Arts for 2023-2024. Taught by Sarah Short, this class is designed for young children to create a seasonally-themed craft with supervision from a trusted adult.

Wednesday, Nov. 15 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Piedmont Arts classroom.

Wednesday, Dec. 6 from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Piedmont Arts classroom.

More dates will be announced throughout the year. These classes are free for members and \$10 for non-members. Participants can reserve spots online at PiedmontArts.org or by calling the museum.



A child paints during a Wee Create! craft.

Special Education Work Group to Develop 2024 Roadmap

The Department of Education announced the creation of a Special Education Work Group comprised of parents, educators, and support organizations to assist the Department in developing the 2024 Roadmap for Special Education. This roadmap is expected to include an increased focus on inclusion, high-quality instruction for all students, strong systems of parents and family engagement, prioritized monitoring and support, as well as an emphasis on post-secondary pathways for all learners.

The Department is also enhancing its monitoring efforts and creating a prioritized special education monitoring team reporting directly to the Superintendent. This team will monitor school divisions and provide intensive support to those school divisions having difficulty delivering effective special education programming.

Both moves come out of comprehensive, external evaluations of Virginia's special education programs commissioned by Superintendent Coons and performed by two leading national experts, Dr. Robert Pasternack and Nathan Levenson.

"Since I arrived, we have worked to improve our special education programming. I am extremely appreciative of the program evaluation teams and their thoughtful recommendations that will inform the improvement of our special

education services," said Dr. Coons. "The new work group will consider these recommendations to help inform solutions that will improve services the Department provides to students, families and schools across the state."

"The Department of Education takes seriously its responsibility to make sure that students and families are receiving the appropriate services they need. The department also has a duty to make sure that school divisions are supported with the guidance and professional development they need to have effective special educational programs," said Grace Creasey, President of the State Board of Education. "The changes being implemented today will ensure that the department is effectively monitoring school divisions to ensure they are providing high quality instruction and access to high quality educators, as well as supporting those divisions who continue to struggle meeting those obligations."

Based on feedback from the program evaluators and to ensure that Virginia's "Right Help, Right Now" behavioral health supports for our schools are a focus, the Department is also launching a new Office of Behavioral Health, focused on mental and physical health of all students and reporting directly to the Office of the Superintendent.

Vaccines from page 1

internet, according to Bearman.

"Maybe there's less fear of contagion or adverse consequences for COVID-19," Bearman said. There's been messaging and re-messaging, which can lead to some fatigue."

The virus has also entered its commercialization phase, meaning it is no longer 100% controlled by the U.S. government, according to Christy Gray, director of the VDH Division of Immunization.

The COVID-19 vaccine has entered into the "traditional health care marketplace," according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There are now more ways to distribute, acquire and pay for the vaccine, including private and public pay.

"You have a lot more moving pieces when the U.S. government isn't controlling the entire process," Gray said. "Now you have a lot more different points of failure that can happen."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention established the Bridge Access Program to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to uninsured or underinsured adults at no cost, according to their website. The CDC estimated this number to be 25 to 30 million adults.

Other factors that could help drive the decreased vaccination rate are the increased availability of COVID-19 testing and treatments, along with an increase in the number of people who have had the virus, according to Gray.

Over 90% of adults received at least one monovalent COVID-19 vaccine in the first year after its rollout, according to Gray. However, that was followed by a decreased number of people who got the bivalent vaccine in 2022.

Groups who are most vulnerable to severe illnesses of COVID are still getting their vaccines, Gray said.

"Fatigue makes sense because society wants to go back to normal everyday life before the pandemic," Gray said. "And we can — this is

just another vaccine that we want to consider in our going into respiratory season."

Respiratory viruses spread more in the fall and winter due to colder weather, more time spent indoors and increased socialization, Gray said.

Decreased vaccination rates can also be attributed to a lack of accessibility, according to Bel Kelly-Russo, a program associate at ImmunizeVA, a project of the Institute for Public Health and Innovation.

It boils down to access: securing an appointment and affording the shot, Kelly-Russo said.

"I would say that there's fatigue, kind of, on the system itself," Kelly-Russo said, including confusion around vaccine billing and distribution.

For example, pediatric offices face high costs to store vaccines for those under the age of 5 years old, which have lower COVID-19 vaccination rates, according to Kelly-Russo.

"If the vaccines are not used, they go to waste, and then that creates the impression that there isn't a demand for those vaccines," Kelly-Russo said. "When in reality, there is a demand, but it's just hard for parents to locate the vaccines because not everyone's stocking it."

There is also just personal hesitancy at play, according to Kelly-Russo. She tries to understand the root cause and concerns.

"I try to come from a place of understanding," Kelly-Russo said. "A lot of times those fears feel very real to people, and so just validating the way that people are feeling in the moment."

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.

PRESENTS
Holiday HAVOC

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2023
 DOORS OPEN 6PM, BELL 7PM

TICKETS:

KIDS 6-12:	13-ADULT:
\$10 ADVANCED	\$12 ADVANCED
\$12 AT THE DOOR	\$15 AT THE DOOR
KIDS 5 & UNDER: FREE!	

BRING A TOY FOR PATRICK COUNTY'S CHRISTMAS CHEER

Veterans Tribute

STUART ROTARY MEMORIAL BUILDING - STUART, VIRGINIA
 CONCESSIONS TO BENEFIT THE PATRICK COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL BAND

SPONSORS:

GET YOUR TICKETS:

RUTTER'S MARTIAL ARTS | FOOD COUNTRY
 LITTLE CAESAR'S | STAGECOACH ON MAIN ST.
 BOYCE-HOLLAND VETERINARY SERVICES

Celebrating 10 Years
Join the Fun!

11/2 10-5
 All Day Fun!
 11/3 10-5 With

Buckin' Good Eats food truck 11:30-2

Follow us to learn more

Mattie-Bs.com

105 N. Main Street, Stuart