

## United Felts launch marks a new era in trenchless infrastructure solutions



The United Felts Team celebrates its 100,000th Liner.

By Debbie Hall

Vortex Companies launched United Felts last week, which was the result of the acquisition of Applied Felts Inc., FerraTex Solutions, and MaxLiner. The new company will unite the three under the banner of United Felts, solidifying its position as the premier supplier of Cured-In-Place Pipe (CIPP).

But aside from the name change and related

rebranding effort, the 200 employees of the facility in Martinsville will notice few changes, according to Matt Timberlake, president of United Felts.

He explained that the operation previously included three distinct groups – the Applied Felts manufacturing facility on College Drive, the FerraTex facility on Holley Drive, which opened in 2019 and applies the resin needed on products

for delivery to customers, and MaxLiner, which shares space in the Holley Drive building and produces small diameter products needed to rehabilitate residential sewer lines.

The building on Holley Drive “will continue to be a shared space,” Timberlake said.

“We do both standard liner construction. The majority of our business” is the production of standard sizes, he said. “But we also can do

custom design,” and therefore can tailor products to specific customer needs.

Operations span multiple shifts, depending on many factors, including capacity and demand.

Vortex announced that the Applied Felts Inc. & FerraTex Solutions brands will be retired over the coming months. The MaxLiner brand will remain intact under the operation of United Felts.

(See United Felts p. 2)

## Budget update presented at meeting

By Taylor Boyd

The Henry County School Board heard an update on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 spending plan at its February 1 meeting.

Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Administrative Services Dr. Benjamin Boone said the Virginia General Assembly is currently in session and is reviewing the Governor’s proposed budget.

“It’s projected to end around March 9. We’ll see if they come out of the session with a budget,” he said.

Boone said the governor’s proposed budget

introduces a proposed one percent bonus for employees in FY25 and a two percent salary increase in FY26.

“The governor’s proposed bonus introduces an increase in basic aid and Standards of Quality. The governor’s proposed budget introduces reductions in incentive programs, state sales tax revenue, and lottery-funded programs,” he said.

Boone said the state share of that one percent for employees is \$408,074. The local share will exceed \$118,269.

The allotment for compensation in fiscal ‘24 was \$4,542,930 from the state and \$1,265,701

for the local share.

“So, you can see ... the state is cutting about ten times less than they provided last year for compensation,” Boone said, adding there also are other anticipated costs in different budget categories.

“We have salaries being absorbed from ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief, which ends in September), we’re looking at our instructional programs, different positions being needed for special education services, transportation needs such as fuel and new buses, utility costs. Also, we’re always looking at improvements for security,” he said, adding that School Resource

Officers (SROs) are paid 100 percent from the school division’s budget.

Boone said state aid in FY23 is more than \$70 million, and increased last year for FY24-25, to a little more than \$72 million.

“However, that does include the All In funding they budgeted last year, so if you included that amount you would actually be looking at a decrease of the state funding,” he said.

The Total Local Funding for FY23 was around \$18.7 million and FY24 was a little more than \$19.3 million.

(See Budget Update p. 2)



A mini exhibit celebrating February’s Black History Month is on display at the Martinsville Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library, put together by the Rev. Tyler Millner, retired pastor of Morning Star Holy Church. It focuses on Virginia’s role in the Civil Rights movement. (Contributed)

## Celebrating Black history, culture

Staff Reports

Communities come together in February to honor and celebrate Black History Month, and to learn about the vibrant heritage of African Americans. In Martinsville-Henry County, this annual commemoration includes several permanent exhibits and special events dedicated to preserving and sharing African

American culture.

The Fayette Area Historical Initiative (FAHI) is a centerpiece. Nestled in Uptown Martinsville, FAHI serves as a living testament to the resilience and triumphs of generations past, via its displays and exhibits that entice visitors to journey through time.

(See Black History p. 3)

## Bill to amend city’s reversion process sails through committee

House Bill 1511, which amends the City of Martinsville’s charter to require a referendum before entering the reversion process, passed through the Virginia House of Delegates.

The bill, presented by Del. Eric Phillips, addresses a request from the Martinsville City Council that was included in this year’s legislative agenda. The amendment requires a majority vote to the question, “Shall the City of Martinsville become a town?” before filing for reversion with the Virginia Supreme Court.

Because the state’s legislation requiring a referendum in Martinsville Reversion ends in 2026, the council felt the amendment to the City Charter would ensure that Martinsville residents will always have the opportunity to voice their opinions.

“One of the major concerns we’ve heard from citizens is they felt left out of the previous reversion process from the beginning,” said Mayor LC Jones, “should this bill pass, citizens will always have a say in the matter.”

Jones and City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides addressed the House Counties, Cities,

and Towns Committee during a meeting held the Friday before the committee passed the bill.

The same committee also passed HB 1512, which amends the City Charter, updating terminology and allowing the city to acquire loans.

“As we return to the mindset of being a growing city as opposed to one that is seeking reversion, the amendments to the charter give us the ability to function in a way that allows that growth to happen,” Ferrell-Benavides said.

The two bills will now be presented to the Virginia House of Delegates.

## Dog trainer teaches pets and their owners, one leash at a time

By Barbara Waldron

Intertwined K9 dog training classes began in January, offered by local trainer, Kaylah Locklear, in coordination with Henry County Parks & Recreation.

Rather than focusing on one particular type of training, Locklear follows the LIMA method, which means “Least Intrusive, Minimally Aversive,” according to the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT).

“LIMA describes trainers who use the least intrusive, minimally aversive strategy out of a set of humane and effective tactics likely to succeed in achieving a training or behavior change objective,” the

website stated.

Locklear said many dog owners do not understand the language behind dog behavior to identify a real problem. Aggression is a typical issue for many owners because they can misidentify the behavior. This is where it’s helpful to have a skilled trainer to guide the owner towards helping the dog become and remain calm.

Successful training sessions are facilitated by identifying the dog’s strengths and the owner’s areas of improvement, according to Locklear.

Most dog owners lack the necessary knowledge about dog behavior to identify a real problem.

(See Dog Trainer p. 3)



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# Budget Update

(cont. from page 1)

“We do not know what that number is at this time,” Boone said.

For FY23, the division received \$10.5 million in grants. About \$11 million was budgeted for FY24 and for FY25.

“It pays for salaries. Grants are kind of work on like a reimbursement process, so it’s kind of money coming in and money going out for that category,” he said.

For Other Revenue, about \$1.7 million is budgeted from things like Medicaid.

“For FY23 we had a little bit over \$100 million, \$101 million for FY24, and \$102 million” for FY25. Again, without knowing what we’re going to be funded locally. You know, I can’t put a number right that as of yet,” he said.

Boone said from FY24 going into FY25, there is an increase from the state of about \$2 million, excluding the All In funds, one-time funds, and state grants in the grants category.

The local share in FY23 was \$15.7 million with the local government giving the division \$18.7 million.

“So, you can say in local leeway what they did above local share was a little above \$3 million,” he said.

Boone said for FY24 the local share required by the state government was about \$16.3 million, and the local leeway was about \$3 million over that for around \$19.3 million.

“For FY25, the state government is saying the

local share should increase by \$2 million, or by about \$18.2 million. So, again, we do not know what that local leeway is going to look like just yet, but they are putting more emphasis on local funding for education,” he said.

For FY24 salaries and benefits for teachers, classified staff, bus drivers and aides, administrators, and grants the cost is about \$73.2 million.

The current budget is \$102,513,053, and Boone said the division is looking at a more than \$100 million budget, with about 70 percent earmarked for salaries.

“If you do a five percent increase the total for all of those employees would be close to about \$3.5 million. So, as you see if we’re putting together a budget, if the state is only funding \$2 million more than the previous fiscal year to do a five percent increase, you’d have to find about \$1.5 million to provide a five percent increase,” he said.

In other matters, the board:  
\*Heard from Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis about the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program.

\*Heard an update about the ALL In Virginia from Superintendent Dr. Amy Blake-Lewis.

\*Recognized Magna Vista High School students participating in volleyball, golf, and football.

\*Received certificates as part of February being recognized as School Board Appreciation



Members of the Henry County School Board were awarded certificates for their efforts in a recognition ceremony held during School Board Appreciation Month.



School Resource Officers (SROs) were recognized as part of School Resource Officer Appreciation Day on February 15.

Month.

\*Recognized February as School Board Clerk Appreciation Month.

\*Recognized February as Black History Month.

\*Recognized February as Career and Technical Education (CTE) month.

\*Recognized February 5-9 as School Counseling Week.

\*Recognized February 15 as School Resource Officer Appreciation Day.

\*Approved the consent agenda.

\*Heard the Superintendent’s report.  
\*Heard committee reports.

# United Felts

(cont. from page 1)

The launch of United Felts coincided with a momentous milestone: the production of the company’s 100,000th liner, representing an astounding 200 million feet and “a testament to our unwavering dedication to excellence and customer satisfaction,” the company stated in a release. “This milestone, on the day we announce United Felts, positions us as a leader in the trenchless rehabilitation sector and marks the beginning of an exciting journey towards even greater achievements.”

Timberlake said continuing to build on the company’s legacy is his goal.

“We want to continue to build on” Applied Felts’ “30-year legacy,” Timberlake said and added the facility is ranked as a Best in Class. “Martinsville is home for everyone at that plant,

and we’re not going to change that. We’re going to continue to invest in the facility” and in its employees.

“I have been overwhelmed by the number of employees I’ve talked to” in the last few weeks, who have been dedicated to the Martinsville operation for 25 years or more, Timberlake said, adding there are plans to grow the Martinsville operation.

“As early as last week, I was looking at other” industrial sites, Timberlake said. “We want to build on the legacy that is there” in Martinsville.

Timberlake noted that “the launch of United Felts marks a pivotal moment in our journey, as we continue to push boundaries and deliver solutions to our customers. United Felts inherits decades of manufacturing experience and

innovation to lead the industry, offering unparalleled quality, efficiency, and service excellence,” Timberlake said and added that the ethos of the company is encapsulated in its brand promise: United to Deliver Big. It also reflects the company’s dedication to surpassing customer expectations, delivering with precision, speed, and reliability, each step of the way.”

As part of the rebranding effort, United Felts also introduced a new logo, to symbolize its commitment to a bold new era in trenchless rehabilitation and American-made quality. The logo embodies the company’s values of innovation, quality, and reliability, setting the stage for a future defined by excellence.

A leading provider of advanced trenchless water and sewer technologies, Vortex Companies

delivers a comprehensive suite of rehabilitation products, equipment, services, and field support to the municipal, industrial, and commercial marketplaces, according to its website. Its products include pipe and manhole lining systems; sewer robotics; mortars; epoxies and resin materials; liners and wet-out services, installation equipment; contracting services, training, and field support.

“Our dedication to our customers is embodied in United Felts, as we strive to deliver BIG with every liner we produce,” Mike Vellano, CEO of Vortex Companies, said in a release. “With United Felts, customers can expect unmatched quality, impeccable lead times, and exceptional service, reaffirming our commitment to exceeding expectations.”



Matt Timberlake, president of United Felts, tours the Martinsville facility, located at 450 College Drive, with Martinsville Mayor LC Jones and Jim Adams, chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors.



Mike Vellano, Vortex Companies CEO; LC Jones, Mayor of Martinsville; Matt Timberlake, United Felts President; and Jim Adams, chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors.



Martinsville Mayor LC Jones, Matt Timberlake, president of United Felts, and Jim Adams, chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors.



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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## Meetings

**Monday, February 19**

Martinsville City Public Schools School Board will hold a regular meeting at 6 p.m. in the MCPS Central Offices, located at 746 Indian Trail, Martinsville.

## Events

**Friday, February 9**

Music Night at the Spencer Penn Centre. Hard driving old-time string band, Nobody's Business, will 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. Concessions, including the ever-popular Spencer Penn hotdogs, will be sold.

**Friday and Saturday, February 9-10**

February Fundraiser for Fieldale Recreation Center & Pool, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the center, 70 Marshall Way, Fieldale. Features all new merchandise, including home goods, clothing and holiday items. Cash only event.

**Saturday, February 10**

African American Read-In and Family Day, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Piedmont Arts. The museum's annual celebration of African American artists, performers and writers with story time, a musical act, crafts, and a public read-aloud. In addition, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts' Artmobile will be set up for the public in the Piedmont Arts parking lot. Participation in Family Day and the Artmobile are both free.

**Wednesday, February 14**

The SPCA will host a walk-in animal Wellness Clinic from noon to 3 p.m. No appointments. Please be prepared for a wait. There have been some changes to the prices and the offerings; low-cost vaccines,

dewormer, microchip, and so much more to help you keep your pet healthy! For pricing information, visit [www.spcamhc.org/services/wellness-clinic](http://www.spcamhc.org/services/wellness-clinic). NOTE: Clinic staff cannot treat sick or injured animals.

**Thursday, February 15**

Art Talk with Suellen Coelho, 6:30 p.m., Piedmont Arts. Suellen Coelho will discuss fashion, costume design, and her research of second line parades in New Orleans. Coelho studied costume design in her home country of Brazil and holds an MFA in costume design from Louisiana State University, where she was also a teaching assistant. She joined the Hollins University theatre department in fall 2021 as an assistant professor teaching costume design and construction, stage makeup and props-related special topics courses in the theatre department. Reception at 6:30 pm. Talk at 7 pm. Free with suggested donation of \$20.

**Saturday, February 24**

Daddy/Daughter Dance, 6-9 p.m., Spencer-Penn Centre. Tickets are \$50 for Father/Daughter, and \$15 for each additional daughter. Purchase by texting DANCE to (276) 286-0434.

## ONGOING

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.

TOPS FIELDALE VA 0626 meets each Tuesday at 5:45 pm at the Rangeley Ruritan Building on 134 Calloway Drive, Fieldale, VA. New members are welcome. For more information, call Patti at (276) 358-0489.

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, 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.

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](http://brrl.lib.va.us).

The Fontaine Ruritan Club hosts Bingo every Tuesday at 1903 Joseph Martin Highway, Martinsville. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. 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.

## Black History

(cont. from page 1)

The Baldwin Block Canvases, displayed outside the Baldwin Building (New College Institute), depict a streetscape view of buildings and places significant to the history of this location on Fayette Street and the culture, including the Baldwin Pharmacy, Jobbers Pants Co., and Saint Mary's Hospital, among others.

The Bassett Historical Center currently houses more than 35,000 genealogy books, manuscripts, genealogy family files, local history files, family

photograph files, and periodicals, including Henry County's Cohabitation List and the book Afro-American Marriages of Henry County, Virginia, by Harris and Millner. (Call ahead - by appointment only.)

The June German Ball Mural depicts a fictional scene from one of Martinsville's famed June German Balls, which were popular within the African American community in the early part of the 20th

century. These balls were held annually, in the heat of June, and featured celebrated entertainers from the Jazz age like Jimmie Lunceford & His Dance Orchestra, who performed at the event in 1938.

There are several historical markers throughout the area that highlight Black History, including the Chatmoss Historic Marker; Dry Bridge School Historic Marker; Fayette Street Historic Marker, and the recent Martinsville Seven Historic Marker.

## Dog Trainer

(cont. from page 1)

Aggression is a common issue for many owners because the behavior is easily misinterpreted, according to Locklear. This is where the owner's ability to help the dog become and remain calm may benefit from having an experienced trainer by their side.

Locklear said the current class is learning "look, place, come, and marker charging." While many know the meaning of the first three commands, marker charging may not be as commonly known, according to Better Dog Behavior Now, and is achieved by giving a treat or other highly desired reward is delivered at the marker word "yes" or the sound of a clicker. (<https://betterdogbehaviornow.com/the-magic-of-markers>.)

"Ensuring the dogs attention on the owner is vital to successful training," said Locklear, and added that each session focuses on teaching two or three commands, with the owner practicing at home before the next lesson.

The next sessions will focus on getting the dog into a "heel" position and move on to "loose leash" walks. Locklear said. Heel means having the dog at your left side while walking, and loose leash walking works by having the dog walking calmly beside you without pulling. The goal is for both the owner and the dog to have a fun, successful walk with the dog focused on the owner.

Depending on participation, future courses include the current class of adult dogs, puppy classes, and AKC Canine Good Citizen (CGC) and testing.



Henry County Parks & Recreation is providing the space for the six-week weekly course at a cost of \$75 payable to Locklear.

Locklear also is seeking additional venues to be



able to offer more dates and times, and she is available for private lessons or consultation. Learn more at [intertwinedk9@gmail.com](mailto:intertwinedk9@gmail.com) or on Facebook at Intertwined K9.

# Collaborative effort to unlock talent, opportunities heads to Dan River Region

In a joint effort to empower local businesses and foster regional economic growth, the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce, the Martinsville Henry County Chamber of Commerce, and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) are hosting an exclusive webinar event.

Scheduled for February 13, from noon to 1 p.m., the webinar will provide chamber members with invaluable insights into two transformative initiatives: the Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership (V-TOP) and the EmPOWER work-based learning framework. The initiatives have been meticulously crafted to assist employers in recruiting top-tier talent and fortifying regional talent pipelines, ensuring long-term prosperity and success for businesses across the region.

Funded through the Commonwealth Innovative Internship Fund and Program, the purpose of the V-TOP program is to expand paid and credit-bearing student internships and other work-based learning opportunities in collaboration with Virginia employers and facilitate the readiness of students, employers, and institutions of higher education to participate in internship and work-based learning.

"This webinar is a direct result from requests of Chamber members in our annual membership survey," said Anne Moore-Sparks, president

and CEO of the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce. "Listening to the needs of business and commencing with high quality, in-demand programming is a top priority. We are excited to partner with the Martinsville Henry County Chamber of Commerce and are fortunate to have IALR as a partner because of their experience and reputation in facilitating work-based learning opportunities."

There are several resources available through V-TOP to support businesses' internship and work-based learning efforts, including modules to assist employers with developing an internship program, free mentor training, staffing agency services and internship stipend matching funds (for employers of certain sizes).

"Many of our chamber members are looking for ways to bring awareness to the talent pipeline. Our members are willing to utilize work-based learning opportunities as a valuable tool for introducing the workforce to their organizations," said Brenell Thomas, president of the Martinsville Henry County Chamber of Commerce. "Partnering on this event made sense because it provides an efficient and convenient way for the members of both chambers to gain insight about the valuable resources available through V-TOP."

The Institute for Advanced Learning and

Research is the regional V-TOP facilitator for the Danville Pittsylvania County (and greater GO Virginia Region 3) region. EmPOWER is IALR's employer-driven system to empower and connect students to careers and provides employers with a variety of opportunities and formats to connect with their future talent.

"Work-based learning is an amazing way to connect with young talent and develop employees with the skills employers need. Work-based learning is incredibly diverse — it's not just internships. IALR's EmPOWER team is passionate about connecting employers to programs and resources that work for their organization," Jessie Vernon, Program Manager for the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research.

The one-hour webinar will be facilitated by both Jessie Vernon, Advanced Learning Program Manager, and Kiana Dillard, Work-Based Learning Coordinator, at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research. While this webinar is designed for chamber members only, non-chamber businesses who are interested in additional information should contact Jessie Vernon at [Jessie.Vernon@ialr.org](mailto:Jessie.Vernon@ialr.org) or (434) 766-6722.

There is no cost to attend but registration is required at [https://bit.ly/V\\_TOPWebinar](https://bit.ly/V_TOPWebinar).

# OPINION

## Push Me, Pull You

I am often asked by friends and constituents how things are going in Washington. I have to say I am doing my best, but sometimes I get frustrated.

We know that there can be partisan gridlock that slows things down in Washington, but right now frustrating and nonsensical decisions are coming from the Biden Administration.

The way they decide policy reminds me of the Doctor Dolittle character, the Pushmi-Pullyu, an animal with two heads at opposite ends of its body.

Currently, the Administration is trying to push billions and billions of taxpayer money out the door to fund new-fangled energy technologies that are not fully developed, while at the same time closing a door on the natural gas industry that brings down costs for families and helps our national security interests.

Recently I chaired a hearing in the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, in which I questioned a Senior Advisor at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about the agency's new Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The fund was authorized by the so-called Inflation Reduction Act, which has \$27 billion for Green New Deal projects. (A recent report in the Daily Caller even says they are going to deem the playground for the wealthy, Martha's Vineyard, as "low income" to push EV charger subsidies.)

According to the law, the agency must award all the funds by September 30th. That is a staggering amount in the next eight months.

While I did not vote for the Inflation Reduction Act and don't agree with many of the policies, the fund is set to hand out \$27 billion in taxpayer funds in a short amount of time and we must ensure there are proper protocols put in place to limit waste, fraud, and abuse of this money.

During the hearing, I asked our witness about the specific audit and debarment measures the EPA will use to ensure compliance by grantees, but also sub-grantees.

I also asked him to ensure that both grantees and sub-grantees will be responsive to this Oversight Subcommittee.

I asked this because unfortunately the federal government has run into issues in the past when funding and overseeing new types of energy and environment projects. A prime example was when the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) gave loans to Solyndra from 2009 to 2011. Abuse by DOE and their failure to properly administer the program cost the American taxpayers an additional \$170 million.

And pulling in the other direction, Biden recently announced that he would be instituting a ban on permits for new projects that



**Morgan Griffith**

Representative

export U.S. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to countries that do not have free trade agreements with the U.S., including all of Europe.

Unfortunately, limiting LNG exports will not only have negative effects here at home, but also internationally.

Blocking new LNG projects will damage future natural gas infrastructure and kill thousands of good paying American jobs. Before Biden's ban, a 2017 report by ICF International indicated that by 2040, the U.S. LNG industry was projected to support between 220,000 and 452,000 additional U.S. jobs. Additionally, the report projected the industry would add between \$50 billion and \$73 billion to the U.S. economy.

U.S. exports of LNG also help protect ours and other countries' national security interests.

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, U.S. companies increased their LNG exports so that European countries would not have to rely solely on Russia.

This was in an effort to not only restrict the revenue Russia would receive from their LNG exports, but also decrease the likelihood that Russia could destabilize the region should they want to retaliate against Europe for supporting Ukraine.

Recently, I met with a few members of Bulgaria's Parliament who talked about Bulgaria switching from Russian to U.S. LNG and how they were glad to have U.S. energy sources to rely on.

So, on the one hand, the Administration is pushing billions of dollars to implement new and untested technology, and on the other hand they are pulling the benefits of technology that helps here and abroad.

Not only that, but the Administration has also now adopted this push/pull stance on foreign affairs. They have claimed to support Ukraine and previously advocated for exporting LNG in order to support Ukraine and the rest of Europe. Now they are stopping new permits, which will help Russia and hurt Ukraine.

How does any of this make sense?

It's time for the Biden Administration to stop these senseless decisions that push in one direction and pull in the other.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, call my Abingdon office at (276) 525-1405, my Christiansburg office at (540) 381-5671, or via email at <https://morgangriffith.house.gov/>.

## My burgeoning morning routine

Things are getting serious now.

It's time to break out the free samples.

This milestone came about during coincidental yet pointed timing.

A few days ago, I saw a row of vertical wrinkles next to my left eyebrow. Like I always do, I pushed the skin back into place to make the wrinkles disappear.

Yet this time, they didn't. They stayed there.

I pulled the skin in another direction while opening my mouth and eyes wide to stretch the face. Then I released.

Nope, they were still there.

With a sigh of resignation, I realized I am going further into that point of no return. Of course, I've been there for quite a while, but until now, could always reposition everything on my face or touch up the makeup to hide the signs of aging. This time, they persisted.

A couple of days later, and this was the coincidence of timing, the new three-door all-mirrored (inside and out) medicine cabinet was installed in the bathroom. This thing is beautiful. It's a true work of art. It is well made, and sparkles and invites you to indulge in storing pretty containers and looking at your pretty face. It was a \$1,250 piece I got on an amazing clearance price of \$207, so you can imagine how smitten I am with it.

Once it was installed, it just elevated the bathroom to a whole new level of glamour. That, along with white towels hanging on gorgeous new chrome towel racks and sparkly matching silvery mirrored soap dispensers and a few other delights, make our bathroom the place to be now in our house.

When you go into our bathroom now, there's no escaping yourself, because that mirrored cabinet is so big. And we have another mirrored cabinet on the other side, above the other sink.

With a combination of bemusement and a sinking feeling of bad timing, I realized that this would have been a luxurious medicine chest to have during the first half of my life, but it would be a mocking constant reminder of the aging process during the second half of my life.

I repeatedly offered the new chest to my teenage daughter, but she kept insisting that she wanted to keep the original chest on the other wall for herself.



**Holly Kozelsky**

"You have more stuff to store than I do," she explained.

"You are in the prime of life. The teenage years are the years to lavish in mirrors," I told her.

So here I am with my 2-foot-high, 3-foot-wide new cabinet filled with pretty pastel colored jars of various sorts of face creams. These are the face creams that come as special gifts whenever I have bought the Super Duty Retin-A Face Preserver I have been buying since I was 25.

That Face Preserver is expensive, but I thank God, it is one useful foresight I had and investment I have been making from a young age. At 25, when my skin was great, I shuddered in horror at the thought of being covered in wrinkles. I figured the wrinkles would probably come at the old age of 30, at which point I would probably need a facelift.

The way I researched any major purchase, I went to the library and looked through the issues of Consumer Reports until I found what I was hoping to find: A study of face creams. The Super Duty Retin-A Face Preserver was listed at the very top of the rankings, and I have been using it ever since.

When you buy makeup at the makeup counters during the special offer times, you get cute little bags with jars of other stuff. I never used the other stuff, because once the first thing is on my face it seemed like enough.

Now, though, assorted face creams line the glass shelves: Resilience Youth Revival, Power Face Multi-Effect, Revitalizing Premiere Day Indulgence, Advanced Lift & Firm, Anti-Aging Eight-Hour Regeneration Serum ...

So now I have to start getting ready for the day even earlier, to wait for the Retin-A Face Preserver to dry before slathering on one of those creams and then wait for that cream to dry before putting on the face primer which is some sort of foundation for your foundation.

And then I can start the makeup.

## How business consulting works

Hi team, I want to thank you all for attending today's meeting.

Well, it was quite an interesting fourth quarter here at Dynamic Paradigms. As you all know, 2023 was our most profitable year yet; if trends continue, we could crack a billion in pure profit in 2024. If that happens, you can rest assured that we'll be having another pizza party this December, so let's all put our noses to the grindstone, all right?

We pride ourselves on transparency here at Dynamic Paradigms, so I called this meeting today to tell you about the business consulting firm we hired. A couple of weeks ago, you might have noticed some new faces milling around the office building, and they probably asked you some questions about working here. We brought them in to see if they could find any inefficiencies in our workflow and craft some solutions to increase our productivity.

I'll be honest, their findings were not at all what I expected. They highlighted three main issues that they believe are causing us to fall a little short of our potential.

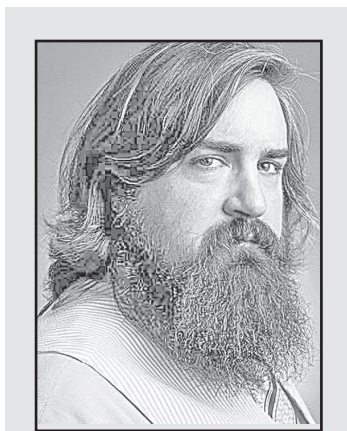
The first issue they shared with me was burnout. I guess some of you told them that you're feeling a little overwhelmed here. Hey, that's OK. Your honesty is important. And don't worry, we've already bought a foosball table for the break room, so that should take care of that. Remember, your mental health is important.

The second issue was very surprising to me. Apparently, our productivity actually increased while we were all working from home during the height of the pandemic, and it decreased when we came back to the office. I won't lie, I found that pretty shocking. However, I think we can all agree that our corporate culture is so important to us here at Dynamic Paradigms that it's worth losing a couple of pennies here and there.

Now, the last point that the consultants brought up is one that I know I've heard a few of you gripe about over the years: the Minotaur.

Look: I get it. I really do. Yes, the Minotaur roams the building and occasionally kills and eats people. Yes, the Minotaur is a hideous abomination birthed by Pasiphaë, wife of Minos. Yes, we have all occasionally gotten lost in the Minotaur's dread basement labyrinth.

But you know, there's a reason they call it "work." Every job has its downsides. Back in the '70s, I put myself through college by working at a car wash. Let me tell you, I used to hate having to scrub wheels. It was the worst part of the job. But you know what? It was still part of the job, and I did it. I know the Minotaur can be a bit of a



By Ben R. Williams

hassle, but he's also an important part of our company culture. When my father founded this company in 1958, he had two options: he could buy a small building that he estimated the company would outgrow in a decade, or he could buy a much larger building that would allow for constant expansion. As a visionary, he wanted to buy the much larger building, and the only way he could afford it at the time was to buy a property inhabited by a bloodthirsty demigod. If he hadn't made that bold choice, it's safe to say that we wouldn't be sitting in this room today. Do we really want to tarnish his legacy?

Additionally, let us not forget that for decades, every employee of this company had the occasional run-in with the Minotaur. Many of our best men and women lost their lives fighting the Minotaur, and many more of our former employees still carry scars. Really, if we get rid of the Minotaur, doesn't it do a disservice to all those who suffered under the Minotaur in the past?

Don't get me wrong, I have no regrets about paying our consultants \$75,000 for their detailed report. However, I just don't feel like they were able to get the full picture of our corporate culture in the month they spent in our office. Also, they seemed pretty distracted after the Minotaur killed and ate their grad student, so they probably weren't giving our business the attention it deserved.

All in all, while I'm grateful for their insight, I don't think we need to make any further changes. Here at Dynamic Paradigms, we know what we're doing.

On an unrelated note, I'm pretty sure I just heard something flip a table in the break room, so I'm going to go ahead and institute a Code M and encourage you all to safely and calmly flee for shelter. Thank you for your time.

## Super Crossword

### STORYBOOK SENTIMENT

- |  |  |   |   |   |  |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>ACROSS</b>  | <b>49</b> Gp. opposed to leather         | <b>96</b> Canon camera brand  | <b>3</b> She won a Tony for "Hurlyburly"  | <b>44</b> Biting turtle                     | <b>80</b> Funds                                |
| <b>1</b> Auxiliary professor                             | <b>51</b> Made a habit of taking risks   | <b>98</b> — part (role-play)  | <b>4</b> Stage actress Hagen              | <b>45</b> Ordinal suffix                    | <b>82</b> Sly — fox                            |
| <b>8</b> Nickname for baseball great Ruth                | <b>54</b> Actress Cuthbert               | <b>100</b> 1996-2002 sports sitcom  | <b>5</b> Pious sister                     | <b>46</b> Like so, informally               | <b>83</b> Tortoise's top                       |
| <b>15</b> Cultural value system                          | <b>57</b> French for "summers"           | <b>101</b> Song phrase following "See you later, alligator"               | <b>6</b> Actor Hume of "Cocoon"           | <b>48</b> Correo — (Spanish airmail)        | <b>86</b> Calf product                         |
| <b>20</b> High-fashion clothing                          | <b>58</b> Bible book after Micah         | <b>107</b> Amazes   | <b>7</b> Heads, to Henriette              | <b>50</b> — over (satisfied for the moment) | <b>87</b> Caesar's "Behold!"                   |
| <b>21</b> Knows someone at the company, say              | <b>59</b> Dwell at                       | <b>108</b> Daddy's boy  | <b>8</b> Iota preceder                    | <b>52</b> "Movin' —" (sitcom theme song)    | <b>88</b> Campus mil. program                  |
| <b>22</b> Reluctant (to)                                 | <b>62</b> Coffee holder                  | <b>109</b> Prague citizen   | <b>9</b> Novelist Robbins                 | <b>53</b> Tube prizes                       | <b>89</b> Singer Halliwell                     |
| <b>23</b> "Wait, my rant isn't finished ..."             | <b>63</b> In love                        | <b>110</b> Victor's hand gesture  | <b>10</b> N.Y. hours                      | <b>55</b> Brand of fruit drinks             | <b>94</b> Underside of a dog's foot            |
| <b>25</b> Private, as desires                            | <b>67</b> Big name in candy wafers       | <b>111</b> Prefix with type or plasm                                      | <b>11</b> Cranky cry                      | <b>56</b> Year, in Brazil                   | <b>95</b> Liftoff stress                       |
| <b>26</b> Agnus — (lamb figure)                          | <b>68</b> 2011-13 Fran Drescher sitcom   | <b>115</b> What's spelled out by the starts of six answers in this puzzle | <b>12</b> Singer DiFranco                 | <b>60</b> Signs up                          | <b>97</b> Hebrew horn                          |
| <b>27</b> "Cool beans!"                                  | <b>74</b> Paris' Champs- —               | <b>121</b> Lot units  | <b>13</b> Stanford- — test                | <b>62</b> Multilevel structure for Fluffy   | <b>99</b> With 106-Down, North Pole surrounder |
| <b>28</b> Down dinner                                    | <b>75</b> Certain scanning device: Abbr. | <b>122</b> Countering an attack by missile, e.g.                          | <b>14</b> Occupy                          | <b>64</b> Suffix with chlor- or fluor-      | <b>100</b> Cling (to)                          |
| <b>30</b> Look lewdly                                    | <b>83</b> Stool or pew                   | <b>123</b> Pundit chief Boutros Boutros- —                                | <b>15</b> — Lilly & Co.                   | <b>65</b> Model Cheryl                      | <b>102</b> Perfumer Lauder                     |
| <b>31</b> 2018 war documentary directed by Peter Jackson | <b>84</b> Milk container                 | <b>124</b> Hockey feints  | <b>16</b> Until this time                 | <b>66</b> "ER" or "CSI" themes              | <b>103</b> Absurd                              |
| <b>38</b> Composer — Sebastian Bach                      | <b>85</b> Just a tiny bit                | <b>125</b> Fill with more inventory                                       | <b>17</b> "Just one moment!"              | <b>68</b> Get a move on                     | <b>104</b> Missouri's — Mountains              |
| <b>40</b> Hamilton/Burr confrontation                    | <b>90</b> Op-ed writer Maureen           | <b>126</b> Like soon-to-be-unveiled tech                                  | <b>18</b> Verdi opera                     | <b>69</b> Lead-in to "So sue me!"           | <b>105</b> Toon pic                            |
| <b>41</b> Era upon era                                   | <b>91</b> Art of Erté                    | <b>DOWN</b>   | <b>19</b> Tears to bits                   | <b>70</b> Caesar's 202                      | <b>106</b> See 99-Down                         |
| <b>42</b> Turndowns                                      | <b>92</b> Once existed                   | <b>1</b> Mil. school  | <b>24</b> "Told ya so!"                   | <b>71</b> N.C. State's NCAA div.            | <b>111</b> Kin of -ette                        |
| <b>43</b> Stati — (America, in Italian)                  | <b>93</b> Eldritch                       | <b>2</b> Finished   | <b>29</b> Recurring themes                | <b>72</b> "— Na Na"                         | <b>112</b> Novelist Jennifer                   |
| <b>44</b> Stage design                                   | <b>94</b> Links gp.                      |   | <b>32</b> Detests                         | <b>73</b> Tolling away                      | <b>114</b> Pre-CIA gp.                         |
| <b>47</b> La — Tar Pits                                  |  |   | <b>33</b> Author Blyton                   | <b>76</b> Fetching                          | <b>116</b> "— a girl!"                         |
|  |  |   | <b>34</b> Oil, informally                 | <b>77</b> Certain surrealist paintings      | <b>117</b> Fabric dye brand                    |
|  |  |   | <b>35</b> Dweeb's kin                     | <b>78</b> Eye maladies                      | <b>118</b> Retired NBAer Ming                  |
|  |  |   | <b>36</b> Cassini of 20-Across            |   | <b>119</b> Vote down                           |
|  |  |   | <b>37</b> Quick quip                      |   | <b>120</b> "True —" ("Indeedy")                |
|  |  |   | <b>38</b> Minty Kentucky Derby drink      |   |  |
|  |  |   | <b>39</b> — last legs (about to collapse) |   |  |

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# OPINION

## General Assembly session is now at full steam

The General Assembly session is now at full steam. Committees are considering long dockets of legislation submitted by the Senators and bills are beginning to come to the floor for consideration by the full Senate. This also was the last week to file any remaining bills for consideration by the General Assembly.

As part of our effort to keep Virginians safer, we considered bills proposed by my fellow Republican colleagues in the Senate in the Senate Courts of Justice Committee. Simply put, Republicans want to take firm action and stop the illegal sale of fentanyl and other dangerous drugs that often lead to deaths from overdoses. These deaths are tragic and result in the heartbreaking grief of families and loved ones who go through this indescribable pain. It is so important that we do everything we can to prevent these deaths and hold accountable those who played a role in these tragedies accountable. Republicans supported legislation to crack down on those who play a role in deaths due to dangerous illegal drugs. Under the Republican bill, an individual illegally providing drugs that are responsible for the death of the user could be charged with second degree murder—even if no money was involved. My Republican colleagues and I think it is just common sense that with the number of deaths due to substances like fentanyl increasing, it is time to hold the people who provide these drugs that result in death accountable for their actions. Most Democrats on the Courts of Justice committee refused to support this common-sense measure and the bill died on a party-line 8-7 vote.

On other matters, a few years ago, Democrats passed a law requires that Virginia's rules related to auto emissions and electric vehicle mandates mirror those set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). This means

that California bureaucrats—who work and live 2,500 miles from here, and are not even elected by Californians, never mind Virginians—are setting rules Virginians are forced to live by whether they are right for us or not.

Because of this, Virginians are on course to phase out sales of gasoline-powered vehicles by 2035—the same schedule California has set for itself. Whatever CARB decides for California automatically becomes wrong. It doesn't matter that companies like Ford are cutting electric vehicle production because sales are below expectations. It doesn't matter that battery life is lousy in cold weather here. It doesn't matter that it will cost billions to upgrade the electric grid to give us the capacity to charge all these cars. Because of the bill passed by the Democrats a few years back, Californians make our rules, not Virginians. My Republican colleagues and I want to change that. A bill was put forward to return control over these rules to Virginia, co-sponsored by every Republican in the State Senate. Even with all that support, Democrats used their majority on the Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee to kill the bill. Sadly, that leaves Californians in charge of telling Virginia what our auto emission standards should be.

I'm proud to share that Senate Bill 112, the Virginia Small Business Economic Development Act, which I strongly advocated for, successfully reported out of committee this week. This comprehensive bill will provide much-needed support and resources to our state's small businesses and will allow them to participate in the gaming industry that has been created by the law passed a few years back regarding gaming in Virginia. This bill establishes a tax and regulatory framework for skill game regulation, creates a dedicated

funding source for small business development, our local governments, and school modernization. Also, my bills regarding the banning of cell phone use by students in our public schools during school hours, creating a return to offering vocational technical education training in our public schools, and expanding the ability of the New College Institute to engage in needed workforce training in our region that will create a tech-talent workforce pipeline that will attract new businesses to our area all advanced to the Senate floor for final consideration by the Senate. I anticipate that each of these bills will cross over to the House of Delegates for consideration soon.

With the deadline to file new legislation proposals occurring this past Friday, I submitted the following proposals:

Senate Bill 684, the Online Children's Safety Protection Act. This vital legislation aims to protect our children online by requiring specific safeguards from tech companies and empowering the Attorney General to hold them accountable. In today's digital age, children deserve robust protections against harmful content and predatory practices.

Senate Joint Resolution 48, designating March 31st as FIRST Robotics Day in Virginia. This resolution honors the incredible work of FIRST Robotics, an organization that inspires young minds to pursue STEM careers through robotics competitions. Recognizing their contributions will showcase the importance of these programs and encourage further support for them.

As always, I want to encourage you to watch the General Assembly session. You are welcome to visit us in person in Richmond and view the proceedings from the gallery. But you can also stream each day's session. Session begins



typically at noon each weekday except Friday when it generally starts at 10 a.m. Always check these times as they can change when needed. You may also be interested to know that committee meetings are also streamed.

As always, I want to hear your views, opinions, suggestions, and questions as it relates to legislation or state government. You can email my office at [district7@senate.virginia.gov](mailto:district7@senate.virginia.gov). And if you are in Richmond, please come by my office at the General Assembly building. I am in Room 514. While my schedule is often hectic and subject to change, I would love to say hello to you if I can.

The coming weeks promise to be even more action-packed, with committee hearings on key bills and potential floor votes on critical legislation. I am committed to representing your interests on every issue, from education and healthcare to economic development and infrastructure. As always, your feedback is invaluable. Please don't hesitate to stay in touch and let me know your concerns. Thank you for the privilege of serving the 7th Senate District. It is an honor to represent you in Richmond.

## Application period open for DMV grants

If your organization is dedicated to keeping Virginia's roads safe, the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' (DMV) Highway Safety Office wants to help you save lives with essential grant funding. Applications may be submitted by local governments, state agencies, institutions of higher learning and non-profits serving Virginia with transportation programs. Grant applications are due February 28.

Grant funding is available in many areas of highway safety such as pedestrian safety, motorcycle safety, speed prevention, and drunk and distracted driving prevention. Below is more information on these areas of safety. Does your organization have a program that can help?

**Pedestrian safety** – Vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists need your support. In 2023, 132 pedestrians were killed in crashes. DMV is looking to fund programs that share pedestrian safety education in their communities or help in enforcement surrounding areas that are problematic for pedestrians.

**Motorcycle safety** – In 2023, there were 2,125 crashes on Virginia's roadways involving motorcycles. Motorcyclists need drivers to share the road and up-to-date training for motorcyclists is vital for safe travel. DMV is looking to fund programs that raise

awareness around motorcyclist training, promoting the importance of helmets or promoting safe operation of motorcycles through public information campaigns.

**Speed prevention** – Speeding is a primary factor in crashes year after year. In 2023, speed was a factor in 25,229 crashes resulting in 446 deaths. Programs focused on prevention, enforcement and raising public awareness surrounding the dangers of speeding could receive vital funding from DMV.

**Drunk driving prevention** – Last year, 252 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes. DMV wants to partner with organizations that seek to share information and raise enforcement to help prevent drunk drivers from getting behind the wheel.

**Distracted driving prevention** – In 2023, distracted driving resulted in 21,486 crashes. If your organization is dedicated to raising public awareness surrounding the dangers of distracted driving, DMV wants to help.

If your organization is helping raise awareness in one of these areas, please consider applying for a highway safety grant. Examples of program evaluation measures and more information on additional funding areas can be found on our website. For more information on grant applications or required training workshops, please reach out to the DMV program manager in your area.

## Bills to make cocktails to-go permanent pass muster

The Virginia House and Senate respectively passed HB 688 (Vote: 81-18) and SB 635 (Vote: 40-0), companion bills that would permanently allow cocktails to-go to be sold from bars, restaurants and distilleries in support of businesses and consumers, according to the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) and The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA).

Currently, cocktails to-go for take-out and delivery in Virginia are set to expire July 1.

"Local bars, restaurants and distilleries continue to face headwinds with inflation, supply chain disruptions and staffing shortages," said Andy Deloney, senior vice president and head of state public policy at DISCUS. "Cocktails to-go offer a stable and important source of revenue for Virginia businesses while providing increased convenience for consumers. Making cocktails to-go permanent provides long-term stability for those in the hospitality sector and continues a convenience many adult consumers have come to enjoy over the last four years. We applaud the Virginia House and Senate for moving these measures forward."

Since the beginning of the pandemic, 23 states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws to permanently allow cocktails to-go, and 9 others have enacted laws that allow cocktails to-go on a temporary basis. Numerous states are still considering cocktails to-go legislation.

"During the pandemic, cocktails to-go was a vital lifeline to help keep Virginia's restaurateurs in business, and it has continued to be a highlight for both restaurant operators and our customers into the present," said Eric Terry, president and CEO of VRLTA. "As the restaurant industry is confronted with rising costs on a number of fronts, tools like this will help ABC-licensed establishments maintain their businesses and teams. We are grateful to have worked with our legislative patrons and partners across the alcohol and food service industries to make this permanent."

The distilled spirits industry is committed to responsibility and encourages moderation for adults who choose to drink alcohol. Cocktails to-go are intended for home consumption. Laws governing alcohol consumption must always be observed.



**Dr. Pamela Randall (right) was awarded the 2023 SAR Bronze Good Citizenship Medal by Andy Doss, registrar and past president of the Colonel George Waller Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. (Contributed photo)**

## Randall awarded the 2023 SAR Bronze Good Citizenship Medal

The Colonel George Waller Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution awarded the 2023 SAR Bronze Good Citizenship Medal to Dr. Pamela Randall. The prestigious award that is bestowed upon individuals whose outstanding contributions to their community exemplify the highest ideals of citizenship.

Dr. Randall, a long-time educator and community leader, has demonstrated exceptional commitment to enhancing the cultural fabric of our society. Currently serving as the coordinator of Education Programs and professor with Longwood University through NCI, she has dedicated her career to fostering academic excellence and enriching the lives of her students.

In addition to her academic endeavors, Dr. Randall's passion for music has led her to establish two remarkable ensembles within the Martinsville community. In 2014 Dr. Randall founded the Smith River Singers, and 4 years later the auditioned choral ensemble Still Water, she currently serves as the artistic director and conductor for both groups.

In 2019 she expanded her impact by assuming leadership of the Martinsville Handbell Ensemble, where she serves as director, providing an avenue for local musicians to showcase their talents and enrich the community through the art of handbell ringing. Through these initiatives, she has not only elevated the cultural landscape of Martinsville but has also inspired countless individuals to pursue their artistic passions and contribute to the betterment of society.

Dr. Randall's dedication to the arts extends beyond her professional responsibilities, as she generously volunteers her time and expertise to various community initiatives aimed at promoting music education and appreciation. Her unwavering commitment to nurturing the talents of others and her tireless efforts to instill a love of music within our community epitomize the spirit of the SAR Bronze Good Citizenship Medal.

In a statement, Andy Doss, registrar and past president of the Colonel George Waller Chapter said, "The board of directors of the Chapter are honored to recognize Dr. Pam Randall for her exceptional contributions to our community. Her dedication to enriching the lives of others through education and the arts embodies the core values of the Sons of the American Revolution. We commend her exemplary service and commitment to fostering a more vibrant and culturally enriched society."

The Colonel George Waller Chapter extends its heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Pamela Randall on this well-deserved honor and expresses gratitude for her outstanding service to our community.

For more information about the Colonel George Waller Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, please visit the chapter's Facebook page.

Email submissions@  
theenterprise.net

# CLASSIFIED

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Carpentry/Cabinetry - fine woodworking, design, tile, closet & garage organizers, repairs, etc.  
Originally based in Palm Beach County- References. Bob Morehouse  
Phone: 276-930-1703  
Cell: 561-881-8292 E-Mail: Bob@Woodwrx.net  
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Forestry mulching, overgrown property cleanup, bush-hogging, pasture & field reclamation, ATV & walking trails, hunting lanes, skid-steer, tractor and mini-excavator work. Free estimates. Call 276-229-9410 or Facebook Thomas Land Solutions LLC

### HELP WANTED

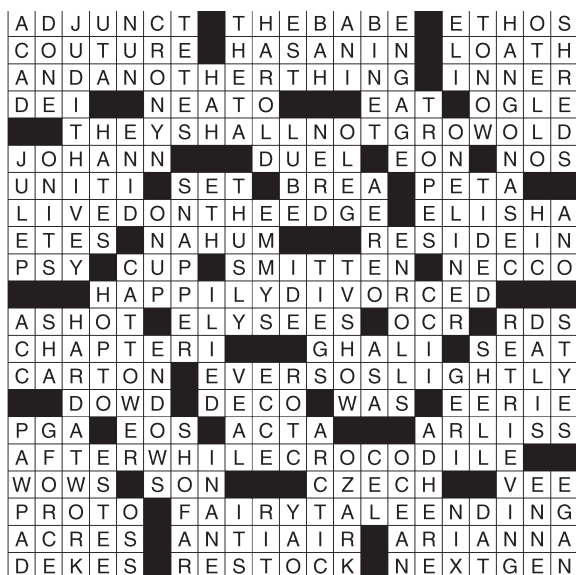
**Health Education Coordinator** – will plan, administer and coordinate evidence-based health education programs, at community sites, for older adults in a four county/two city service area. Training will be provided. Requires excellent organization, time management and communication skills. Ability to plan, develop and coordinate services. Experience in volunteer recruitment and retention is preferred. Ability to keep track of and follow through on a variety of details. Bachelor's degree in human services social work or related field is preferred. At least two years' experience in a health or human service setting, that

required extensive contact with the public, is preferred. Must be proficient in Microsoft Office Products. Criminal background check is required. Position is 40 hours per week, with health insurance benefits. Submit resume to Southern Area Agency on Aging, 204 Cleveland Avenue, Martinsville, VA 24112 by 2/26/24. SAAA is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

**Care Coordination Assistant** – Full time with benefits. Non-profit organization is seeking individual who will serve as the initial and primary contact for callers and visitors who are seeking information about resources in the community and/or application for services for older adults. Will provide front-line communication, referral, information and assistance services for older individuals and others seeking help. Strong skills in human relations; and excellent oral and written communication skills are essential. Proficient computer skills are required. Degree in a human services field or comparable experience is preferred. Criminal background check is required. Send resume to Southern Area Agency on Aging, 204 Cleveland Avenue, Martinsville, VA 24112 by 2/26/24. Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

If you've read this far, you can see how a classified ad in the Henry County Enterprise can work. Let our readers know you're hiring with a classified ad in The Enterprise for as little as \$8 a week. Call 276-694-3101 or email submissions@theenterprise.net for more information.

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



## Outdoor burning restrictions take effect on Feb. 15

Virginia's law that restricts outdoor burning will take effect this year on Feb. 15.

Outdoor burning is only permitted between 4 p.m., and midnight, as long as the burner takes precautions and attends to the fire at all times.

"Fires are more likely during late winter and early spring because winds are usually elevated, the relative humidity is lower, and the fuels on the forest floor are extremely dry because they have cured all winter without the shade of tree leaves," said Fire Marshal Lisa Garrett. "After 4 p.m., winds usually calm down and the relative humidity

levels rise, both of which reduce the potential for a debris fire or any outdoor open-air fire to escape."

The annual restriction will end on April 30.

There are legal and financial repercussions for those who fail to abide by the law. Violation of this law is a Class 3 misdemeanor with a maximum fine of \$500.

## New peer-to-peer mental health resource available for farm families

While difficult circumstances in agriculture often are temporary, certain decisions can be permanent.

Farming is tough on the best of days, said American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall at the recent AFBF annual convention in Salt Lake City.

"And it can really be lonely out there sometimes, especially with the pressures that we face," he continued.

Florida farmer Marshal Sewel, founder of the Mind Your Melon mental health education program, knows this firsthand.

"My senior year of high school, my dad made the decision that the world no longer needed him," he said in a video presentation. "I don't know if he was overwhelmed by the bills, and checks that weren't coming in because his strawberries were dying off. But it breaks my heart that my dad made a permanent decision out of a temporary issue."

It takes courage to speak up, or reach out when others are hurting, Duvall continued.

"That's why Farm Bureau entered in a new frontier years ago when we took on mental health and wellness," he said. "I'm proud to say the Farm State of Mind platform has become a go-to resource for our rural communities."

Now, AFBF has established a new relationship with the Farm Family Wellness Alliance to launch access to a peer-to-peer support community Togetherall, free to all American farm

families 24/7. Additional counseling services also can be made available at no cost.

"This groundbreaking resource gives farm families access to an online community that understands the challenges that come with agricultural life," said Matt Nuckols, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation safety coordinator.

Togetherall is a safe, anonymous online community continuously moderated by licensed physicians, said Jessica Cabrera, AFBF managing director of member engagement. She explained that farmers and their family members aged 16 or older can set up a profile with an anonymous username. They can then access a global network of peers who will listen and support them.

"Farming is very challenging and often farmers are living in isolation or facing stigma about reaching out for help," she noted. "Taking that first step to reach out is often the hardest step to take."

Togetherall offers a range of tools, including self-assessments and access to additional support services through a partnership with Personal Assistance Services. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, financial health, improving sleep and more. In addition to the global community, Togetherall offers access to agricultural sector sub-groups in which farmers can share their experiences with like-minded people.

Visit Togetherall.com or farmstateofmind.org for rural mental health resources.

## LEGAL

### COUNTY OF HENRY REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a public hearing has been scheduled for **February 14, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following this public hearing, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the application to the Board of Supervisors.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing on the following application on **February 27, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia.

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

#### Case R-24-01 Christy L. Harbour

The property is located at 74 Seminole Dr, in the Reed Creek District. The Tax Map number is 28.6/312,312A. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 3-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Neighborhood Commercial District B-2. The applicant wishes to move her existing business providing wellness based spa services to this property.

The application for this request may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Lee H. Clark, AICP  
Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

Your Community, Your Voice  
Serving Henry County, Martinsville, and Surrounding Area  
**HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE**  
henrycountyenterprise.com

### Weekly Publication

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### 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

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Be sure to like the Henry County Enterprise on Facebook

## LEGAL

### Notice of Unsafe Structures

To All Owners and Parties in Interest of the Following Properties\*:

**1113 W Fayette Street - condemned 12/18/2023**

Sussie Hairston

**201 First Street - condemned 12/13/2021**

Keishawn Niblett - Conservator of Estate of Josephine Niblett, Josephine Niblett

**30 1/2 (rear) High Street - condemned 1/29/2024**

Frances H Richardson

**807 Pipe Street - condemned 12/29/2023**

Mae Hairston & Jobie King, Mary Penn, Jobie King, Bernida Hairston, Lucy Biltoft,

Mary Standfield, Elizabeth Harber, John H. Harber, Jr., and Any Unknown Heirs

**208 Askin Street - condemned 7/17/2023**

Richard M. & Patricia I. Watts

**1217 Lawson Street - condemned 11/29/2022**

William Thomas Collier, Robert Nixon Collier & Cheryl Lynn Collier, Sole Devises of Barbara Collier, dec'd

All unknown/unidentified Heirs, Lien Holders and Trustees for the above properties

The City of Martinsville's Inspections Division inspected the above referenced properties and found them to be in violation of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) for the maintenance of existing structures. The violations are listed below:

#### 1113 W Fayette Street

- PM -106 - Unsafe structure, extensive damage due to neglect.
- PM -304.2 - Exterior surfaces not maintained in good repair (excessive vegetative overgrowth)
- PM -304.4 - Structural members not maintained free from deterioration.
- PM -304.6 - Exterior walls not maintained free from holes or breaks.
- PM -304.7 - Roof system not sound or tight to deter rain.
- PM -702.1 - Safe and continuous path not maintained to the building

#### 201 First Street

- PM -106 - Unsafe structure, extensive damage due to fire and neglect.
- PM -301.3 - Vacant structure, not maintained safe and weather tight.
- PM -304.1 - Exterior not maintained in state of good repair.
- PM -304.4 - Exterior wall structural members deteriorated.
- PM -304.6 - Exterior walls not maintained free from holes or breaks.
- PM -305.2 - Structural members not capable of supporting the imposed loads.
- PM -501.1 - Plumbing and water service not maintained as approved.
- PM -601.1 - Electrical system not maintained as approved.

#### 30 1/2 (rear) High Street

- PM -106.1 - Unsafe, unsecure structure.
- PM -301.3 - Vacant structure not maintained safe and secure.
- PM -302.3 - Walkway not kept in good repair.
- PM -302.5 - Structure not kept free from rodent harborage.
- PM -304.4 - Structural members not maintained free from deterioration.
- PM -304.6 - Exterior walls not maintained free from holes or breaks.
- PM -304.7 - Roof not sound and tight to admit water.
- PM -304.10 - Deck not maintained structurally sound.
- PM -304.13 - Windows not kept in sound condition.
- PM -501 .1 - Plumbing service not in compliance.
- PM -604 .1 - Electrical service not in compliance

#### 807 Pipe Street

- PM -106 - Unsafe structure, extensive damage due to neglect.
- PM -304.2 - Exterior surfaces not maintained in good repair (excessive vegetative overgrowth)
- PM -304.4 - Structural members not maintained free from deterioration.
- PM -304.6 - Exterior walls not maintained free from holes or breaks.
- PM -304.7 - Roof system not sound or tight to deter rain.
- PM -702.1 - Safe and continuous path not maintained to the building.

#### 208 Askin Street

- PM -106 - Unfit for human occupancy, due to neglect.
- PM -305.1 - Interior of structure not maintained in good sanitary condition.
- PM -305.2 - Structural members not capable of supporting the imposed loads.
- PM -305.3 - Interior surfaces not maintained clean and sanitary.
- PM -308.1 - Structure not free from excessive accumulation of rubbish or garbage.
- PM -501.1 - Plumbing and water service not maintained as approved.
- PM -601.1 - Electrical system not maintained as approved.

#### 1217 Lawson Street

- PM -106 - Unsafe structure, extensive damage due to neglect.
- PM -304.2 - Exterior surfaces not maintained in good repair.
- PM -304.4 - Structural members not maintained free from deterioration.
- PM -304.6 - Exterior walls not maintained free from holes or breaks.
- PM -304.7 - Roof system not sound or tight to deter rain.
- PM -304.10 - Deck not maintained structurally sound and in good repair.
- PM -702.1 - Safe, continuous path of travel not provided.

### ORDER

The Building Official has determined that in order to abate the unsafe or dangerous conditions on this property, this building must be razed and removed within (30) days of this notice.

Failure to comply with this order to abate the unsafe and dangerous conditions on this property will result in the City of Martinsville taking action to abate such conditions in accordance with the provisions of Virginia Code Section 15.2-906 and or the USBC, as the Building Code Official deems appropriate. This may result in legal action against you, which would subject you to a fine of up to \$2,500.00, or the City may take the necessary action, up to and including the taking down and removal of this building, and charge the costs or expenses thereof to you. Any charges assessed that are unpaid would constitute a lien in that amount against the property.

### Right of Appeal

You have the right to appeal this decision of the Building Code Official to the local Board of Building Code Appeals as provided for in Section 108 of the USBC. A written request for such an appeal shall be made on forms provided by the Code Official, and filed with this office within 14 calendar days from receipt of this notice and accompanied by a fee of \$100.00. Applications for appeal may be obtained in the Inspections Office located in Room 217 of the Municipal Building on W. Church Street., Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

# Dairy issues recall of cheese products

Country Corner Dairy, LLC, of Cullen, Va., has issued a recall of all cheese and skyr (similar to yogurt) products sold between August 2, 2023 and January 24, 2024 with a batch/date stamp of 080223 through 012424, due to a lack of proper pasteurization. A lack of proper pasteurization could have allowed dangerous pathogens to survive in the product.

Recalled products include Cuajada Cheese; Blueberry Flavored Skyr; Grape Flavored Skyr; Pineapple Flavored Skyr; Cherry Flavored Skyr; Raspberry Flavored Skyr; Strawberry Flavored Skyr; Vanilla Flavored Skyr; White Cheddar Cheese; Yellow Cheddar Cheese; White Colby Cheese; Yellow Colby Cheese; Sizzling Colby Cheese; Monterey Jack Cheese; Marble Jack Cheese; Pepper Jack Cheese; Garlic and Chives Cheddar Cheese; Garlic and Dill Cheddar Cheese; and Smoked Cheddar Cheese.

These products were packed in approximately 8 oz., 2.5 lb., 5 lb., and 40 lb. units and were distributed at Peacock Hill Dairy in Richmond County; Miller's in Farmville; Pine View Grocery in Farmville; Spring Hollow Grocery in Buckingham County; Country Corner Dairy in Charlotte County; Cedar Grove Auction in Charlotte County; Hollering Hill Auction in Halifax County; and Central Virginia Produce Auction in Buckingham County.

Consumers who have purchased Country Corner Dairy cheeses or skyr with the above batch/date stamp may return the products to the place of purchase for a product exchange or refund.

No illnesses have been reported to date in connection with this recall. Consumers should not consume these products, even if the product does not look or smell spoiled.

# Drivers Reminded to Make a Game Night Game Plan

The big game is right around the corner and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and Virginia State Police (VSP) urge drivers to have a game plan to ensure a safe and sober ride home.

"You often hear people say, 'the best defense is a good offense,' and when it comes to preventing drunk driving that is so true," said DMV Commissioner Gerald Lackey, the Governor's Highway Safety Representative. "If you choose to go out and celebrate with alcohol, please make sure you have a plan before you go out, to get home safely. And never drink and drive. We want to make sure that when the game is over everyone makes it home safely."

On Super Bowl Sunday 2023, in Virginia there were 28 crashes involving alcohol and 2 fatalities (12 p.m. February 12, 2023 - 3 a.m. February 13, 2023). For the past three years, at least one life was lost in an alcohol-related crash the night of the Super Bowl. Twenty-three drivers were charged with driving while intoxicated on Super Bowl Sunday by VSP Troopers last year. DMV and VSP urge Virginians to work together to make this Super Bowl Sunday a night of zero alcohol related fatalities or DUIs.

State and local law enforcement will be out helping keep drivers and vulnerable road users safe. VSP Troopers will increase visibility on the roads around game time to ensure people can watch and get home safely.

"We understand people want to celebrate the game with family and friends, and that those celebrations may include alcohol," said Col. Gary Settle, Superintendent

of Virginia State Police. "We want Virginians to choose to find a safe way home if one's Super Bowl party includes alcohol. Driving under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit drugs puts yourself and others at risk. Avoid this by having a plan in advance that involves a sober driver or alternative transportation."

If caught drinking and driving, you can face jail time, lose your driver's license and your vehicle, and pay up to \$10,000 in attorney's fees, fines, car towing, higher insurance rates and lost wages. Having a plan to get home and making the choice not to drink and drive can prevent all of that. Here are some things to consider when making your game night game plan:

\*Designate a driver – Talk with your friends and find a designated driver. If you are the designated driver, take that responsibility seriously.

\*Call a car – Before you go out, make sure you have the number for a taxi service in your phone or download a ride-booking app like Uber or Lyft.

\*Buckle up – Just because you made the responsible choice to not drink and drive sadly does not mean others will do the same. Always buckle your seat belt; it is your best defense in a crash.

\*Host responsibly – If you are hosting, make sure there are plenty of non-alcoholic beverage options and food for guests. If you see someone preparing to drive who you know has been drinking, speak up and help them find a safe ride.

For more information on how to prevent drunk driving visit DMV's website.

# Timberlake named president of Applied Felts



**Matt Timberlake assumes the role of president at Applied Felts Inc.**

Matt Timberlake assumes the role of President at Applied Felts Inc., overseeing all operations, including Applied Felts, Maxliner, and Ferratex. With an illustrious 25-year career in the underground utility industry, he brings a wealth of experience and strategic acumen to lead the team into a future of growth and success.

In this pivotal role, Timberlake will execute a vision guided by Mike Vellano, focusing on early wins, sustaining customer commitments, and ensuring satisfaction while strategically shaping the long-term trajectory of the business. Timberlake is honored to take on this position and is poised to lead the company to significant victories.

Having joined the Vortex execu-

tive team in 2019, following the acquisition of his family business, Ted Berry Company, Timberlake previously served as the Senior Vice President of Shared Services. In this capacity, his primary responsibility was to enhance efficiency and transparency across product and service divisions. Timberlake played a crucial role in capitalizing on internal equipment, materials, and knowledge to streamline processes and optimize resource allocation. His efforts were instrumental in empowering middle management and sales personnel, fostering a responsive and dynamic environment.

A third-generation member of the family-owned Ted Berry Company Inc., Timberlake served as its president until its acquisition by the Vortex Companies. Throughout his career, Timberlake has been recognized by various industry associations for his outstanding contributions to the advancement of trenchless solutions and underground utility repair. Notable accolades include the Northeast Trenchless Association Founders Award, the Maine Wastewater Control Association Presidents Award, the Maine Water Environment Association Communications Award, and the Maine Water Utilities Association Jim Doherty Award.

Currently residing in Charlotte, North Carolina, with his wife Christine and five children, Timberlake is well-positioned to lead Applied Felts Inc. into a future of innovation, excellence, and continued success.

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\*Host responsibly – If you are hosting, make sure there are plenty of non-alcoholic beverage options and food for guests. If you see someone preparing to drive who you know has been drinking, speak up and help them find a safe ride.

For more information on how to prevent drunk driving visit DMV's website.

# City to receive grant for brownfield restoration

Gov. Glenn Youngkin announced Wednesday that \$1.76 million in Site Remediation Grants from the Virginia Brownfields Restoration and Economic Redevelopment Assistance Fund (VBAF) will be awarded to six localities, which include the City of Danville Industrial Development Authority (IDA), the Town of Floyd, the City of Martinsville, Orange County, the Orange County Economic Development Authority, and the Town of Pound.

Martinsville will receive \$189,500 for the former BB&T building uptown.

The VBAF provides either grants or loans to local governments to restore and redevelop brownfield sites and address environmental problems or obstacles to their reuse in an effort to effectively attract new economic development prospects. Administered by the Virginia Resources Authority, the VBAF is a partnership between the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Department of Environmental Quality.

Brownfields are properties in which redevelopment or reuse is complicated by the presence of hazardous materials, pollution, or con-

taminants. The Site Remediation Grants will cover efforts that include remediation of a contaminated property to remove hazardous substances and wastes, demolition and removal of existing structures, and other site work necessary to make a site or property usable for new economic development. In addition to Site Remediation Grants, Site Assessment Grants are available to communities for assistance with environmental and cultural resource site assessments and the development of remediation and reuse plans.

"Redeveloping brownfield sites is a critical step to enhance community infrastructure and effectively attract economic development, and the Virginia Brownfields Restoration and Economic Redevelopment Assistance Fund is an important vehicle that helps localities across the Commonwealth meet this goal," said Youngkin. "We are taking proactive steps to remediate properties and drive future economic growth and are proud to support rural development with these grants."

Since its inception in 2011, the VBAF has awarded over \$17.5 million in over 250 grants to restore brownfield sites.

# Kickoff St. Patrick's Day with a "Beers of Ireland" Lecture & Tastings

Join the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society and Scuffle Hill Brewing Company for "Beers of Ireland" on Saturday, March 16, 2-4 p.m., at the Historic Henry County Courthouse, 1 East Main Street, Uptown Martinsville.

"History and beer – what a perfect combination," John Phillips, president of the Historical Society, said. Kick off your St. Patrick's weekend with us as we learn and taste Irish beers. Let the shenanigans begin."

During the first hour, participants will learn the history, ingredients, and production of beer as well as different beer styles, hops, yeast, and beer presentation.

During the second hour, attendees will taste Irish Reds and Irish Stouts, totaling approximately two pints. Irish snacks will be served.

Wear your green attire – the more the better. Prizes will be awarded.

The event will be taught and led by Jake Abell, owner of Scuffle Hill Brewing Company. He earned a Beer Brewer Professional Certificate from Virginia Tech and the University of Richmond. A veteran of the U. S. Marine Corps, he graduated from Patrick & Henry Community College and Liberty University. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society.

Tickets are \$10 per person. Advance reservations are required to be made by March 10 at <https://jbphillips.wufoo.com/forms/beers-of-ireland/>, and paid at the door. You must be 18 years of age to attend and 21 years old to partici-

# Martinsville students named to the Honor Roll, Principal's, and Counselor's lists

For the first nine weeks of school, the following Martinsville City School students were recognized for their academic prowess:

## Albert Harris Elementary

### 3rd Grade Principal's List

Abby Cruz-Santiago, Daniel Gionelli, Kacie Hylton, Kaleb Jones, Camila Lara-Diaz, Carmela Nakhle, Nathan Quintal-Santana, Aaden Schmidt, Ka'Myrah Stockton, Oscar Telles, Callie Torres.

### 3rd Grade Honor Roll

Connor Brecht, Khamisi Daniels, Heaven Dillard, Lennette Floyd, Sam Hairston, Hayden Lawson, Miyana Hunt, Zion Gipson, Grayson Hawks, Tayion Martin, Anthony Penn, Paris Salyer-Richardson, Madyson Scales, Maliyah Sessions, Daniel Soto Mato, Myles Stockton, Mackenzie Tellez, Willie Walker, Elijah Woody.

### 4th Grade Principal's List

Londin Bervine, Miriam Carter, Semaiya Craighead, Navaeh Daniels, Jy'Quirian Hairston, Sofia Marcial, Rania Womack.

### 4th Grade Honor Roll

Micah Barton, Sariyah Carter, Kyndall Gravely, Amara Hemphill, Dorian Hodges, Edward Johnson-Davis, Maireny Marchorro, Na'Layah Martin, ChauNasia Moore, Gabriella Murillo, Mwandishi Tarik, Kaitlyn Nelson, Zi'ere Poindexter, Nysier Preston, Antonella Rodriguez, Amina Rumley, Taevon Turner, Estrella Velaquez.

### 5th Grade Principal's List

Jackson Branch, Fernando Carrillo, Jaidence Hairston, Christian Millner, Leonel Reyes, Yetzael Ramos-Tellez, Nylah Kay Scott, DeCoyia Smith.

### 5th Grade Honor Roll

Jamarion Burgess, Maccabeus Daniels, Victor Dominguez-Machuca, Kendrick Floyd, Hayilaa Hairston, Aria Lewis, Shaurya Mahajan, Khamari McRae, Jasmin Nolasco, Andrea Nowlin, Cameron Price Destiny Richmond, Yahya Rodriguez.

## Patrick Henry Elementary

### 3rd Grade Principal's List

Emilia Blankenbaker, Joseph De Leon Reyes, Adrielle Dickerson, Ashanti Gravely, Gabriella Gravely, Jeremiah Hairston, Serenity King, Aiden Kirby, Allan Meyers, Amreen Narula, Jaylon Palmer, Dantonio Penn, DaMari Perkins, Emmanuel Ray, Solomon Ray, Jacob Ratliff, Matteo Rodriguez, Kerri Scales, Espen Troncoso, Paris Turner, Jade Venable, Kaidance Williamson, Zamari Witcher.

### 3rd Grade Honor Roll

Allison Chavez-Dominguez, Aalaysia Dillard, Laila Gravely, Matthew Hernandez-Sanchez, Sebastian LaPrade, Geoffrey Ruschak, Khamille Tatum, Mckenzie Terry, Ashton Wells.

### 4th Grade Principal's List

Elena Alvarez-Lozano, Aiden Boaz, Adelaide Brent, Aubree Carter, Amyrah Dillard, Holden Hylton, Aubrey Kirby, Adelyn McKenzie, Shania McPherson, Mercy Moore, Phoenix Moore, Christian Newsome, Sophia Odberg, Daniel Robinson, Margot Sharp, Aubrey Stone, Emery Taylor, Hailey Turner, Soulionna Walker, Wesley Walker, Lillith Wilson.

### 4th Grade Honor Roll

Winter Bethany, Brazen Bradner, Zefrina Capulong, O'Derion DeShazo, Kavany Flores, Kenyon Jones, Dawayne Lawson, Jayona Moore, Jesmari Morales, Lanay Pruitt, Khwaja Sediqi, Emmie Steward, Lilliana Torres, Naryah Williams.

### 5th Grade Principal's List

Abbas Bayani, Remington Crockett, Archer Deatherage, Lily DeJesus, Deontre Fitzgerald, Jade Holland-Dallas, Wyatt Hoyer, J'Amira Lockett, Kennedy Martin, Virgil Moore, Samuel Olivares-Rosas, Asma Sediqi, Katherine Wall, Dillon Wilson, Mason Wright.

### 5th Grade Honor Roll

Takeria Beal, Kaelyn Conner, Chloe Curry, Tamare Davis, Brooklyn DeShazo, Andrew Dillard, Alanna Gerlach, Jadyne Gravely, Ayden Jones, Josiah Law, Aubree Mahan, Nijel Merritt, JaZai Moore, Taylor Moore, Jycere Moorman, Kendrick Moyer, Kayden Price, King Ray, Bradley Richardson, Kiersten Smith, Kaydien Valentine.

## Martinsville Middle School

### 6th Grade Principal's List

Zariyah Bouldin, Janette Carillo- Llamas, Jairo Mata, Daniya Penn.

### 6th Grade Honor Roll

Kevin Avila-Santiago, Mickeal Belcher, Cassidy Boden, Alan Carillo-Tamayo, Ethan Christopher, Ja'Veona Coles, Lizzy Contreras Rosas, Jeffrey Cousins, Skyla Euceda, Layce Everhart, D'annah Fitzgerald, Elaina Hairston, James Hall, Luis Hernandez, Fredy Jimenez Romero, Taimir Manns, Jewel- Armani Martin, Tonydia Millner-Moore, Freddy Munoz, Bryson Penn, Kyra Penn, Quandel Richards, Ma'Kiya Walton, Maya Williams, Lamerius Woods, Michelle Yanes-Videa

### 6th Grade Counselor's List

Alyce Airington, G'Yanni Benitez, Gannon Blackwell, Mariyah Brandon, TKari Breedlove, Hailey Coleman, Princeton Dillard, Maia Eccles, Janae Eggleston, Nina Giles, Appalania Gravely, Jaymi Henriquez Ramos, Alondra Hernandez Hernandez, Kaylee Hightower, Kamira Johnson, Shanyia Kelly, Sara Lopez Reyes, Amare Martin, Issac McIntosh, Eduin Mendoza Sanchez, Allison Mooney, Akaysha Myers, Imani Newsome, Isabella Palmer, Zion Powell, Kendall Price, Joanneliz Reyes Dennis, Kyla Steward, Selena Stultz, Jordyn Thomas, Elijah Wertz.

### 7th Grade Principal's List

Joshua Branch, Bridgette Brent, Olivia Campbell, Nadia Dominguez Gonzalez, Marisol Garcia-Macias, Renisha Millner, Hazel Moore, America Ramos Tellez, Ayden Roberts, Maheva Simon, Dayanna Torres-Jose, Kailyn Venable.

### 7th Grade Honor Roll

Emely Amaya Turcios, Edward Brown, Christopher Carpio Yanez, Mahcori Chapman, Mackenzie Church, Kayleigh Cristobal, Keira Frazier, Kendra Handy, Zachary Harter, Zanyasia Jones, Nathaly Morales, Ana Nunez-Torres, Adreal Stultz, Arianna Ybarra.

### 7th Grade Counselor's List

Ayleen Airington, Sophia Allridge, Tylicric Barbour, Zyad Bayoumy, Christian Branch, Kaleb Briscoe, Jeysson Cabrera Guillen, Harmoni Carter, Maliyah Carter, Fabian Devora Guerrero, Ty'Layiah Dillard, Na'Ziah Flemming, Marcus Hairston Jr. , Dre'dyn Hairston, Zoey Hannans, Kirsten Henderson, Amelia Humphrey, Kamarii Johnson Clark, Jayren Marchorro- Macias, Zy'Jerryah Martin, Amariyah Matthews, KaVaughn Muse, Jeremiah Porter, Josiah Porter, London Preston, Aurora Rankin, Ja'nasiah Richardson, Diairon Turner, Malik Waller, NyShawn Walton, Nevaeh Wilson, Nathaniel Yarbrough.

### 8th Grade Principal's List

William Bela, Abigail Campbell, Brennan Coleman, J'Kobe Covington, Christopher Floyd, Hudson Grant, Benjamin Haley, Aubrey Hill, Abraham Michael, Aileen Nolasco, Zion Perkins, Veronica Smith, Zaina Talley, Ja'Corian Turner, Lilly Wall, William Wall, Paris Waller, Addison Williamson.

### 8th Grade Honor Roll

Walter Amador Rios, David Argueta, Eland Blankenbaker, Keimani Brandyburg, Jaryus Brim, Chanity Chism, Kira Compton, Cordell Daniels, Keyara Dillard, Ja'Da Eggleston- Wade, Jayden Farris, D'Anna Fields, Brandon Gearheart, Harmoni Hairston, Leeyala Hairston, Jonathan Hudson, Isabella Hurd, NyKira Johnson, Faith Pack, Kaden Paitsel, Colby Robertson, Xavier Rodriguez, Symphony Talley, Phyllis Thompson, Baisley White, Noah Wright.

### 8th Grade Counselor's List

Mekhi Akins, Cristofer Avila-Santiago, Maine Brown, Zhedrick Capulong, JKyiah Daniel, Kyisere Eggleston, Ny'Kerion France, Harmony Galloway, Leonardo Hernandez Mata, Tatyana Holland, Navaih Hood, Demetria Johns, McKenna Mahan, Trinity Martin, Jayden Penn, Camarion Plunkett, Erzart Shahini, Viet Vo, A'Vari Waller, Gabrielle Wilson.

## Martinsville High School

### 9th Grade A

Kyndall Benton, Kayra Carr, Sherman Dillard, Fernando Dominguez-Machuca, Angeliah Eccles, Sarah Greene, Carrie Hudson, Caden Martin, Gabriella Michael, Aniyah Millner, Jazmin Mota-Ocampo, Julie Nguyen, Ariyana Nowlin,

Jaden Porter, Yarety Ramos Telles, Briana Reid, Amyah Richardson, Logan Richardson, Tyrese Smith, JaVonna Stubblefield, Karter Winbush.

### 9th Grade AB

Jaden Ayoub, Qa'Sani Calhoun-Davis, Ta'Mireya Campbell, Jordan Foster, Crystal Gravely, Kamare Gravely, Abigail Hairston, Tyneah Harrell, Shea Keith, Ja'Niyah Kellam, Sariyah Little, De'Mari Martin, Jamarious Pritchett, Trinitee Prunty, Aaron Scott, Shayla Tatum, Emauri Tinsley, Caleb Valentine.

### 9th Grade B

Kavia Brim, Alyana Hairston, Kyniah Hairston, Caish Moyer, Tristan Niblett, Erikka Ortiz-Soriano, Nickolas Prewitt, Joshua Redd, Dulce Romero-Jimenez, Isaiah Stone, NaSir Turner, Zavian Turner, Jarquavis Vaughn, Maria Velasquez-Zaldivar, Alexis Villafana, Rache Waller Jr., Jamauri Williams.

### 10th Grade A

Quentin Chism, Sincere Cook, Jamea Craghead, Shatavia Dillard, Caesar Draper, Abigail Hernandez, Jun Olea, Evan Pickett, Jailyn Reynolds, Tamarion Siddle, Rilynn Williams.

### 10th Grade AB

KeAndre Beal, Kymani Brim, Gabriel Davis, NyKerian Dillard Williamson, Kamori Dillard, Zaniah Dillard, Nadea Elam, Chekiya Galloway, Ka Nyah Giggetts, London Hairston, TyShawn Hairston, De'Nyiran Hodge, Ny'Asia Hood, Ladario Johnson, Jahrine Jones, Aerran Kellam, Michael Kirby, Beyonce Lara Diaz, Myasia Long, Nyasia Long, Takiyah Pettie, Decarion Spencer, Jayden Stockton, Tanasia Walker, Kaira Womack.

### 10th Grade B

Aubrey Blankenbaker, Demetrious Brown, Jordan Draper, Nataly Enriquez-Santiago, Layla Garrett, Ja'Kayla Harris, Gregory Moore, Morgan Niblett, Michael Parker, Linda Pulliam, E'Zavion Tinsley.

### 11th Grade A

Adam Aguilar, Naun Andrade Paredes, Montel Bradner, Ana Compton, Elijah Dixon, Kassidy Dodson, Natalie Dunagan, Xavier Dunham, Ruby Flores, Cameron Giles, Ava Grant, Aidan Hood, Isabella Hood, Kamryn Kirby, Gavin Luther, Alondra Machuca Tiznado, Monserrat Machuca Tiznado, Rickyah Mitchell-Hairston, Yash Patel, Destiny Salda, Jariyah Smith, Brooke Turner, Isabella Vega.

### 11th Grade AB

Jaydin Ayers, Yadira Carrillo Tamayo, Esmeralda Castillo-Ocampo, NaDasia Cobbs, Ny'Asia Cobbs, Sontrell Daniels, Destinie Dillard, Jamirah Farris, Abigail Haskew, Deniyah Hightower, Jose Lara-Alvarado, Jo Lewis, Ashley Lintag, Laimen Lowe, Leon Martin Jr., Aziah Martin, Skyla Martin, John Nguyen, Terriah Roberts, Alexys Rumley, Ayona Stultz.

### 11th Grade B

Anne Agee, Christian Brooks, Caleb Burgess, Keara Carter, Hayden Cundiff, Kasey Inman, Sayvion Milton, Amondre Moseley, Tayana Niblett, Jacey Pamintuan, Jamerica Phillips, Kendryck Redd, Jayden Solomon, Antione Swanson, Christopher Thacker, Cayden Walker, Jayden Williams, DeArriean Williams, Timarius Wilson, Noah Young.

### 12th Grade A

Tyler Carr, Shamiah Carter, Robert Davis, Ryan DiMingo, JKyan Finney, Paris Fulp, Aleeyah Galloway, Briana Garcia-Macias, Trevion Gravely, Latrell Hairston, Gabriel Haley, Sarrah Hoff, Makenzie Hylton, Arlette Jaramillo Mata, Mallori Lowe, Suilma Navarrette Saligan, Martiniano Orozco, Nayti Patel, Kaylee Rea, Mason Rorrer, Skyler Spence, William Stanley, Christopher Talley II, Jordan Vaughn, Jackson Via.

### 12th Grade AB

Kirsten Blankenbaker, NyQuis Bradley, Shi'Mora Brown, Anthony Chism Jr., Johnny Clerc, Niikko Dews, NyAsia Drummond, Jaccob Hairston, Caleb Joyce, Phyllis Long, Natalie Loreda, Luke Luffman, Adam Mounkaila, Elijah Pickett, Cortay Price, John Ratliff II, Syriah Roberts, Jacqueline Servin Hernandez, Jordan Smith, Emarius Tinsley, Aniya Torrence, Kamora Turner, Monica Watkins, Jayden Williams, Whitney Williams, Destiny Witcher, Reagan Wright.

### 12th Grade B

Isaiah Brimmer, Khionna Howard-Hamilton, Sincere Jamison, LynAsshia King, Tyshawn Mahan, Fonshay Moyer, Nadia Moyer, Tyra Valentine, Makayla Warren.

# House bill requires evacuation plan for students with mobility impairments

By Olivia Dileo

Capital News Service

The House of Delegates approved a measure Tuesday that mandates school divisions update emergency plans to include students with mobility impairments.

Del. Laura Jane Cohen, D-Fairfax, a former educator, introduced House Bill 501. She previously served on an advisory committee for students with disabilities as a school board member for Fairfax County Public Schools.

Cohen filed the measure in response to a parent's testimony to the board that their first-grade child, who was in a wheelchair, would be left on the second floor with staff in the event of an emergency, or fire. Parents were "horrified" by that plan, she said.

"They felt like, you know, this was a really lousy idea," Cohen said.

There was no specific state guidance on how to make an evacuation plan more inclusive as they worked within the locality to update the Fairfax school plan, Cohen said. The state's most recent campus and school safety guide advises of needs and accommodations for mental, behavioral and physical disabilities, but does not provide specific guidance.

Just over 14% of students in K-12 schools have a form or multiple forms of disability, according to the state Department of Education.

Cohen wanted to create a framework for schools to make sure all kids can safely evacuate.

"I think this is probably one of the first bills that we wrote the minute that I won," Cohen said.

Matthew Shapiro thinks the legislation is crucially important and was excited it was introduced. He is the founder and CEO of 6 Wheels Consulting, where he works with clients – including Dollywood theme park – to make spaces more inclusive.

Shapiro, a wheelchair user, remembers hiding in a school closet during emergency drills and did not feel there was an actual evacuation plan for him.

"I remember they'd say like, 'OK Matthew, go in the closet, stay in there and do like your little hand over your head thing,'" Shapiro said. "But it's like, that's not gonna keep me safe."

Shapiro also described prior instances where the call systems did not work in the area of refuge, a designated area for when evacuation is not possible. While a "clear and concise plan" is needed, so is practice and execution of the plan, he said.

"When rubber meets the road, are you gonna be able to execute it properly and is stuff not gonna hit the fan?" Shapiro said.

A recent National Fire Protection Agency publication outlines how to develop an emergency evacuation plan for people with disabilities, and the same agency provides a guide with detailed options.

"There is some guidance around the use of elevators, there

are sleds, there are different types of wheelchair-like devices that are able to get down stairs very easily and quickly," Cohen said. "We've seen schools in other divisions that utilize chairlifts, we've also seen slides that come out from that second story window."

School districts will pick up costs to implement any necessary provisions, according to the bill impact statement. Cohen's plan is to work with school districts and the Virginia School Board Association to look at costs and to use available state and federal grants.

"I'm excited to hopefully dig in a little bit and make sure that school systems don't ... tense up and think that this is another unfunded mandate from Richmond," Cohen said. "That's not what it's intended to be, but it is entitled to get our kids with mobility issues out safely."

The bill had unanimous support as it moved through the House. It now heads to the Senate.

"I was really pleased to see it get that," Cohen said. "I struggle to understand a world where folks think that it's OK to just leave kids in a room ... in an emergency and not have them evacuate and not have them practice drills with their differently-abled peers."

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.



## Former Martinsville doctor to get new trial

The recent overturning of Joel Smithers' 2019 conviction by a federal appeals court sparked a significant legal development in the case of the former Martinsville doctor. Smithers, 41, who stood accused of prescribing an astonishing 500,000 doses of opioids in less than two years, will now face a new trial as a result of the appellate court's ruling, US News reported.

The crux of the matter lies in the jury instructions provided during Smithers' original trial, which the appeals court deemed as having misstated the law. The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond also ordered a fresh trial for Smithers, who has been serving his sentence in an Atlanta prison.

Smithers' alleged actions paint a concerning picture of the opioid crisis gripping communities across the nation. Prosecutors asserted that he indiscriminately prescribed controlled substances,

including potent opioids like fentanyl and oxycodone, to every patient he saw at his Martinsville office, which he opened in August 2015. Many of these patients reportedly traveled vast distances to seek his services, with Smithers operating on a cash-only basis, accumulating over \$700,000 in payments before law enforcement intervened in March 2017, according to the report.

During the initial trial, jurors convicted Smithers on 861 counts, guided by instructions that emphasized the need for the government to prove his actions as being "without a legitimate medical purpose or beyond the bounds of medical practice." However, the appeals court found fault with this instruction, citing a 2022 U.S. Supreme Court decision that clarified the necessity for a defendant to "knowingly or intentionally" act in an unauthorized manner when prescribing controlled substances.

## Registration now open for 4th annual Miss Henry County Fair Pageant

Calling all aspiring pageant queens. Registration is officially open for the highly anticipated 4th annual Miss Henry County Fair Pageant, set to dazzle audiences on June 22 at the Henry County Recreation Center.

With age divisions ranging from babies to adults, this pageant welcomes participants of all ages and backgrounds. Whether a seasoned pageant veteran or a first-time contestant, there's a place for you to shine on stage. No previous pageant experience is necessary – just a passion for community spirit and a desire to showcase your inner beauty and talent.

The highlight of the event will be the crowning of the "Miss" category winner, open to contestants between the ages of 17 and 22. The lucky recipient of this coveted title will earn the

opportunity to represent Henry County on a statewide platform, competing in the esteemed Miss Virginia Association of Fairs Pageant in January 2025.

Sponsored by Jones & Deshon Orthodontics and Roanoke Valley Orthodontics, the Miss Henry County Fair Pageant promises to be a celebration of grace, poise, and community pride. With a dedicated team of organizers and judges, contestants can expect a fair and impartial competition that values authenticity and individuality.

For those interested in participating or seeking more information, contact Henry County Parks and Recreation at (276) 634-4640. Don't miss your chance to be part of this unforgettable event – register today and let your inner beauty shine on stage.

## Individual Income Tax Filing Season is Underway

The tax filing season in Virginia is now underway. Taxpayers are now able to file their individual income tax returns.

"We strongly encourage you to file electronically," said Tax Commissioner Craig M. Burns. "It's the faster, safer option. We also recommend that you request your refund, if you have one coming, via direct deposit."

Virginia Tax takes refund fraud seriously and encourages you to do the same. Our automated system reviews returns for suspicious activity or possible fraud, then employees manually evaluate the returns selected for review. Filing early helps ensure the fastest possible refund if your return is selected for review.

Here are some steps you can take to help make sure your return and refund aren't delayed: Gather all W-2s, 1099s and other withhold-

ing information before filing your return;

Include your Virginia driver's license or Virginia identification card number on your return. Returns that don't have that information won't be rejected, but providing it helps us process the return more quickly;

Be sure the spelling of your name(s), Social Security number(s) and all calculations are correct; and

If you moved since you filed your last return, use your current address.

For secure, online self-service you can create and log onto an online individual account. This allows you to track your return or refund. You can also check the status of your refund by using the Where's My Refund application on the Virginia Tax website, or by calling 804.367.2486.

## Initial claims steady in latest filing week

Little change was reported in the number of initial unemployment insurance claims, according to the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (DWDVA). In the latest filing week, initial claims were at 2,541 and remained slightly below typical pre-pandemic volumes experienced in 2019.

For the filing week ending January 27, seasonally unadjusted initial claims for unemployment insurance in Virginia were 2,541, which was a decrease of 35 claimants from the previous week. Continued weeks claimed totaled 14,586, which was an increase of 587 claimants from the previous week and an increase of 26 percent from the 11,624 continued claims from the comparable week last year. An industry was reported for ninety-three percent of continued claims. Of those, over half (58 percent) of continued claims were from administrative and support and waste management (2,015), professional, scientific, and technical services (1,863), construction (1,450), manufacturing (1,393), and health care and social assistance (1,185). Eligibility for benefits is determined on a weekly basis, and so not all weekly claims filed

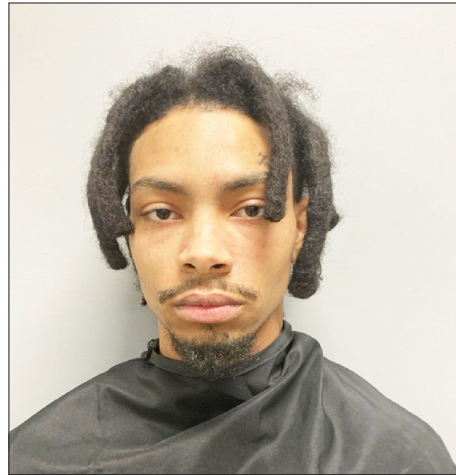
result in a benefit payment. This is because the initial claims numbers represent claim applications; claims are then reviewed for eligibility and legitimacy.

In the week ending January 27, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 224,000, an increase of 9,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised up by 1,000 from 214,000 to 215,000. The advance number of actual initial claims under state programs, unadjusted, totaled 261,029 in the week ending January 27, an increase of 11,082 (or 4.4 percent) from the previous week. There were 225,026 initial claims in the comparable week in 2023.

Looking at preliminary data, most U.S. states reported increases on a seasonally unadjusted basis. California's preliminary weekly change (+5,599) was the largest increase. New York's preliminary weekly change (+4,316) was the second largest increase. Oregon's preliminary weekly change (+4,036) was the third largest increase. Georgia's preliminary weekly change (+811) was the fourth largest increase. Virginia had the 25th largest decrease (-8).



Jamel Daeshaun Turner is being held at the Henry County Adult Detention Center under no bond.



Da'Rehyon Monte Rucker is being held with no bond in the Henry County Adult Detention Center.

## Two held in Collinsville incident

Two men are being held without bond in connection with a February 4 incident in Collinsville, according to a release from Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis.

Around 6:42 p.m. that evening, Davis said, the Martinsville/Henry County 911 Center received multiple calls about shots being fired at the Tobacco and Vape Shop located at 2954 Virginia Ave., Collinsville. When Henry County Sheriff's deputies arrived on the scene, they found that a Ford Escape, which was later determined to be involved in the shooting, was wrecked in Hardee's parking lot, located directly across from the road from the Tobacco and Vape Shop.

The vehicle was vacant but had what appeared to be blood in it, Davis said. A short time later, another call came in about two men inside Wendy's, located at 2801 Virginia Ave. Collinsville, yelling for help. One of the men was bleeding. Before the deputies arrived, the two allegedly ran out of Wendy's and went across the street to the Valero gas station. Deputies were able to locate one of the males inside the gas station. He didn't have any injuries.

The second man was found in the Collinsville Plaza parking lot, which is adjacent to the Valero gas station. The man was identified as Jamel Daeshaun Turner, 24, of 3305 Sunset Road, Collinsville.

Turner, who suffered from apparent gunshot wounds to his right arm and left leg, was transported to SOVAH Health of Martinsville, where he was treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

While deputies were dealing with that situation, another man with a gunshot wound to his torso came into the Emergency Room at SOVAH Health of Martinsville. He was identified as Da'Rehyon Monte Rucker, 22, of 523 Glendale St., Martinsville.

Deputies responding to the hospital determined that Rucker was allegedly involved in the shooting at the Tobacco and Vape Shop. Turner also was treated at SOVAH Health for non-life-threatening injuries.

## Local man held with no bond in Amherst

The Henry County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team executed a narcotics search warrant at 242 Henry Street, Stanleytown, on January 30.

In cooperation with the Amherst County Sheriff's Office, items allegedly seized during a traffic stop led to the arrest of Quinn Lamar Hairston of 242 Henry Street and the execution of the search warrant.

Items seized during the stop included approximately 2000 pressed fentanyl pills, several ounces of Psilocybin mushrooms, and a loaded .380 semi-automatic firearm, which was determined to be stolen from Martinsville.

While executing the Henry St. search warrant, an additional large quantity of suspected pressed fentanyl pills, approximately 1,000 rounds of ammunition, along with additional suspected controlled substances were seized, according to a release

from Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis.

Quinn Lamar Hairston, 34, of 242 Henry Street, Stanleytown, was arrested by the Amherst County Sheriff's Office for items allegedly located during the traffic stop. Hairston is currently held without bond at the Amherst County Adult Detention Center.

The Henry County Sheriff's Office will be issuing additional charges for alleged illegal items seized during the execution of the

search warrant. This investigation is ongoing.

Anyone with information about narcotic trafficking operations 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 of up to \$2,500 for information related to a crime. The nature of the crime and the substance of the information provided determine the amount of reward paid.

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# Voting is underway for the 9th annual Black History Month Art Contest

Casting a ballot in UScellular's 9th annual Black History Month Art Contest with the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Blue Ridge is now open. Community members can vote for their favorite piece of original art online at [newsroom.uscellular.com/black-history-month-art-contest/](https://newsroom.uscellular.com/black-history-month-art-contest/).

The top three vote-getters will be announced in late February and prizes include gift cards in the following amounts:

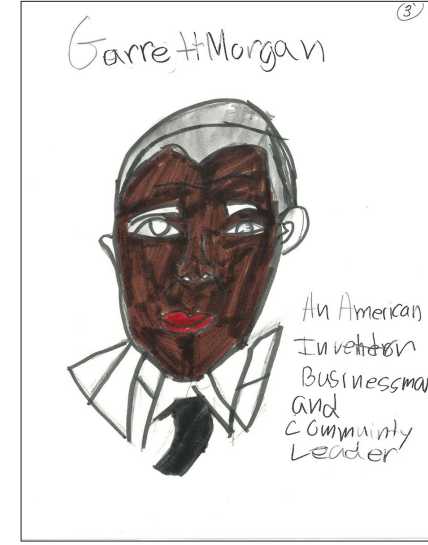
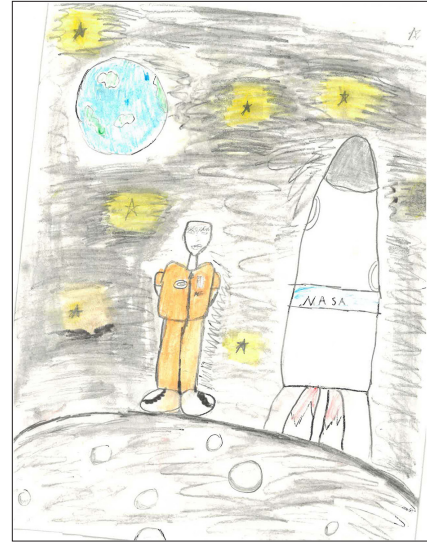
- \$250 for 1st Place
- \$150 for 2nd Place
- \$100 for 3rd Place

New to the 2024 contest, the top three first-place submissions with the most votes will also be named national winners and will receive an additional \$250, bringing their total winnings to \$500, while their home Club will also receive a \$1,500 donation.

Up to 10 finalists from each Boys & Girls Club, including Boys & Girls Clubs of the Blue Ridge, were chosen by Club representatives and local UScellular leaders based on creativity, quality, interpretation, clarity of theme and overall impression. Voting will remain open until February 15, and anyone 18 or older can vote for their favorite. The finalists' artwork is also digitally displayed at the Martinsville UScellular store.

Boys & Girls Club members created original pieces of artwork representing influential Black STEM icons. These included historical figures, world leaders, scientists and educators who have made vital contributions to the world of science, technology, engineering and math.

No purchase is necessary to participate, but entrants who are minors must have parental consent.



## Masters of the Night takes flight February 10 at the VMNH

A traveling exhibit bringing the mystery surrounding bats out of dark is set to make its Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) debut on Saturday, February 10, when the museum unveils *Masters of the Night: The True Story of Bats*. Through a variety of multi-sensory interactive displays, a Gothic castle, and environmentally lifelike settings, *Masters of the Night: The True Story of Bats* dispels popular misconceptions about bats, describes their ecological importance, and gives visitors an appreciation of the true wonders of the bat world.

"The museum is excited to provide this unique exhibit experience to our visitors for the next 11 months," said VMNH Deputy Director Ryan Barber. "As we considered which exhibits to display inside our special exhibit gallery, *Masters of the Night: The True Story of Bats* stood out as an experience that we believe museum visitors will find relevant, distinctive, educational and entertaining."

The touring exhibit, produced by Evergreen Exhibitions, allows visitors to discover the real world of bats as diverse, beneficial mammals with fascinating skills. For instance, visitors can try on a pair of sculpted bat ears to experience the sensitivity of bat hearing, or participate in a demonstration of echolocation in which visitors can use a



joystick to maneuver a bat model in search of food using a laser to simulate sonar.

"One of the most exciting aspects of this exhibition is its combination of traditional museum exhibit elements, such as dioramas depicting the many hiding places of bats in various natural habitats, to more immersive experiences, such as allowing visitors to learn about the huge appetites of bats relative to their weight by weighing replica food sources in a balance scale," said Barber. "There is even an activity station for our younger visitors, where they can create an art rubbing of their favorite bat species to take home."

To celebrate the exhibit's arrival, the museum is hosting an opening day celebration on Saturday, February 10 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In addition to access to the special exhibit and all other museum exhibits, opening day features

a variety of one-day-only offerings, including bat-themed crafts and activities for children, face painting, balloon art, special presentations by bat experts, and a bat specimen station highlighting items from the museum's scientific collections.

"We're really excited to bring this exhibit to our region and feel it deserves to be celebrated," said VMNH Visitor Services and Events Manager Robbie Hendrix-Wirt. "If you're looking for a fun adventure in the middle of winter, we've got you covered with our opening day celebration. Visitors will have access to the museum's exhibits and special activities, as well as the Buckin' Good Eats & Lemonade food truck, which will be on-site for visitors to grab lunch or a quick snack."

General admission rates apply for the opening day celebration. Admission rates are \$10 per adult and \$5 for ages 3-17, seniors 60 and older, and

college students. Admission is free for children under 3, museum members, and members of museums and science centers that participate in the ASTC Passport program.

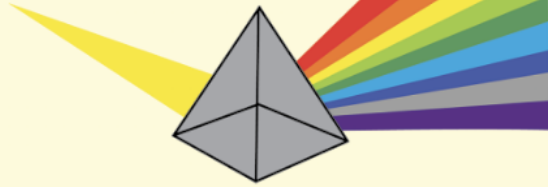
The museum also participates in the Museums for All initiative, offering discounted admission to EBT cardholders. Through this program, and additional funding provided by Hooker Furnishings, Carter Bank & Trust, and the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia, visitors who present their EBT card and accompanying ID at the gate receive free admission to the museum. The free admission applies to the cardholder and up to 5 immediate family members living within the same household.

The exhibition of *Masters of the Night: The True Story of Bats* at the Virginia Museum of Natural History is made possible by The Helen S. & Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust, Bassett Furniture Industries, Monogram Foods Loves Kids Foundation, and Visit Martinsville.

*Masters of the Night: The True Story of Bats* will be on exhibit at the museum from February 10, 2024 through January 11, 2025.

For more information about the museum and its offerings, visit [www.vmnh.net](http://www.vmnh.net).

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