

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

Saturday, February 17, 2024

(USPS-6)

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Man sought in stabbing incident

Henry County authorities on Wednesday were seeking information about the location of a Fieldale man wanted in connection with a stabbing incident, according to a release from Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis.

Jacchaeus Leath, 34, is wanted on one count of malicious wounding in connection with a February 14 incident.

Davis said the Martinsville-Henry County 911 Communication Center received a call around 3:50 a.m., to report that a person had been injured and possibly stabbed at 1542 Crestridge Road, Bassett.

Deputies and investigators from the Henry County Sheriff's Office responded to the scene and located Christopher Ayers, 35, with multiple stab wounds to his lower back.

Ayers was air-lifted to a hospital for treatment for life-threatening injuries.

Authorities learned that an altercation took place between two men in the 2900 block of Stones Dairy Road, Bassett.

It was determined that during the altercation, Ayers was stabbed, and another man allegedly then fled the



scene.

Anyone having information regarding the incident or Leath's whereabouts is asked to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at (276) 638-8751 or Crimestoppers at 63-CRIME (632-7463). The Crimestoppers Program offers rewards up to \$2,500 for information related to crime. The nature of the crime and the substance of the information determine the amount of reward paid.



A grand opening for the Fieldcrest Lodge and Clubhouse is expected to be held early next year.

Reopening of Fieldcrest Lodge to coincide with 250 celebrations

By Barbara Waldron

The Fieldcrest Lodge and Clubhouse in historic Fieldale is planning to reopen just in time to join the celebrations of the 250 United States Semiquincentennial, while attracting visitors to the area, and serving as an economic driver.

Joey Arrington, owner of the lodge, made the announcement Sunday during a Super Bowl event

at the lodge. The project is a collaboration between Arrington, Danny Turner, a former mayor and council member, and Traci Petty, Grant and Scholarship Administrator for the Community Foundation of the Dan River Region.

Turner recognized other attendees that included former congressman Virgil Goode, Martinsville
(See Fieldcrest Lodge p. 2)

Bell named President of Virginia Rural Health Association



Nancy Bell is now President of the Virginia Rural Health Association

By Jeff Reid

Nancy Bell has been named President of the Virginia Rural Health Association (VRHA), a nonprofit devoted to improving the health of rural Virginians through education, advocacy, and fostering cooperative partnerships. It's a membership organization consisting of adult professionals and students on a health career path. The current focus of

the VRHA is on workforce development, equity, and advocacy.

Bell, who is Population Health Manager for the West Piedmont Health District (WPHD), said she will be working closely with executive director Beth O'Connell, her staff, and the Board of Directors from many fields associated with rural health including hospitals, social services, public health professionals, university personnel, and other people who are committed to improving rural health outcomes. She will also chair monthly board meetings, review financials, evaluate staff, and look for funding opportunities.

From life expectancy to maternal mortality, Americans living in rural regions face some of the greatest health care challenges in the country. Bell said that dwindling resources are a major concern in the WPHD which covers Franklin, Henry, and Patrick counties.

"In the West Piedmont Health District there are only two hospi-

(See Bell p. 2)

A winter stroll in Martinsville



A brisk and beautiful winter day in uptown Martinsville, near the Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Center & Museum. (By Pat Delaney)

The Henry County Department of Public Safety is offering a free National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) course from March 5 until July 30.

The course typically costs about \$800 per person. This year, public safety officials are allocating the department's "Four-for-Life" funds to cover the expenses for students.

Successful completion of the course will automatically lead to a Virginia EMT certification.

"The skills that you learn in this course train you to effectively respond in case of an emergency," said Suzie Helbert, deputy director of the department and chief of Training and Volunteer Coordination. "If your loved one were to have a heart attack or if they injured themselves working around the house, would you know what to do? Most people wouldn't but this class can prepare anyone to be a first responder. Even if you don't plan on making it a career, I'd encourage you to apply. You never know when it might come in handy."

The NREMT course will be held every Tuesday and Thursday from 6-9 p.m., and at least one Saturday a month, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. All classes will be held in the department's Emergency Services Training Center, located at 1024 DuPont Road in Martinsville.



EMT students Tiffany Dennis (right) and Allen Jackson demonstrate how to perform CPR and use an automated defibrillator (AED) as part of an NREMT class project.

Topics of the course include emergency medical services (EMS) foundations, airway management, patient assessment, medical emergencies, trauma, special populations, and EMS operations. Anyone interested in volunteering for a local rescue squad is encouraged to apply.

Henry County is currently experiencing a decline in the number of volunteers for these rescue squads. In the past year, the Axton Life Saving Crew was forced to shutter due to a lack of volunteers.

"The demand for emergency services continues to rise, stretching our resources to their limits," said Matt Tatum, director of Public Safety. "I implore you to consider answering the call to serve your community by volunteering for your local rescue squad. Your willingness to give your time,

skills, and compassion can make an immeasurable difference in the lives of those facing emergencies and crises."

For more information about the NREMT course or volunteer opportunities, call Helbert at (276) 634-4662 or email shelbert@henrycountyva.gov.

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Fieldcrest Lodge

(cont. from page 1)

City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides, Pam Cobler, who represents the Reed Creek District on the Henry County Board of Supervisors, and Henry Law, of the Moonshiners Channel, were told that the lodge will offer accommodations in the historic community of the Fieldcrest area and serve as an alternative to local motels and hotels.

Arrington said he "is committed to restoring the lodge and reclaiming its historical place in Southwestern Virginia." He also "is excited to work with the VA250 Commission" in his quest to complete the renovations and reopen the lodge in time for the celebration.

Currently, the lodge, an English Country Style Retreat situated on 500 acres, is used for private events such as weddings, family reunions and retreats. The lodge boasts seven bedrooms, six bathrooms, a great room, private area for conferences, and six stone fireplaces.

A fully equipped commercial kitchen is among the six rooms situated on the first floor.

"There is a dining room/sunroom with capacity for seating 20 people, and a beautiful view of nature and the surrounding area" to offer guests serenity and the opportunity to enjoy the abounding natural beauty, Arrington said.

Restoration efforts began in late 2010, and so far, includes building additional cabins on the property, as well as working on the lodge itself, Arrington said.

When all is said and done, Arrington, Petty and Turner hope

the lodge will take its place as a destination of interest, along with the Martinsville Speedway, the Virginia Museum of Natural History, and Philpott Lake and Marina.

A grand opening is in the works for early 2025, and to that end, "I'm open to working with partners and coming up with creative solutions to help make Henry County- Martinsville an international destination for people who want to explore the American experience," Arrington said, and added that McMillian Automotive, Speedway Service Center and Custom Cars "is going to merge to be a powerhouse here locally for automotive station wagons and hot rod cars."

A former NASCAR driver and former owner of Arrington Manufacturing, Inc., Arrington said the lodge is steeped in history. It was built in 1917 by Marshall Field & Company, the lodge has many amenities for those who enjoy the outdoors.

The nearly 8,000 square foot facility overlooks Smith River, one of the East Coast's premier trout streams, which makes it uniquely situated for tubing, canoeing, or kayaking. It includes more than 400 acres for hiking and biking. Other close fishing spots include Smith Mountain Lake and Philpott Lake. The Martinsville Speedway also is nearby.

"So much history that goes so much farther back than that, going back to 1760 Col. George Waller and his wife Ann Winston Carr, Patrick Henry's cousin, settled in this area and built a farm, a settlement now known as Fieldcrest," Petty said.



Kathryn Gobler Madkour, Pam Cobler, Henry County Board of Supervisors; Martinsville City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides, and Traci Petty, Grant and Scholarship Administrator for the Community Foundation of the Dan River Region.

dale," Petty said.

Col. Waller set up an area to train militia as the American Revolution began, taking three companies of men to the battle of Guilford Court House in Greensboro, N.C.

The companies marched on, crossing the northern part of North Carolina and then heading back into Virginia to join General Washington in Yorktown. The victory was later secured, and Cornwallis returned the land to America, "and declared them free," she said.

Noting that she and Arrington have worked with the local Virginia 250 Commission Committee, as well as others on the celebration, Petty said, adding the 250th anniversary "is something that's coming up and we're happy to say the Fieldcrest Clubhouse is going to be on that list because it is on that



Clifton Durman (seated) was among the guests Sunday when Joey Arrington (standing) announced that the Fieldcrest Lodge and Clubhouse will reopen in time to host visitors attending the 250 United States Semiquincentennial/Virginia 250.

property."

She is currently updating a website that will provide more information on current and future events. A Facebook page is available with updates on Fieldcrest Lodge and can be accessed at www.facebook.com/fieldcrestlodgeofficial.

Arrington may be reached by calling (276) 790-4260; Turner can be reached at (276) 358-1671.

Bell

(cont. from page 1)

tals, and they don't deliver babies," she said. "Maternal health and infant mortality resources are one of the challenges we are working on by seeking funds for doulas and other resources."

Bell said rural communities face other challenges like having ample emergency services, transportation in general, and opioid addiction is prominent.

"Hospitals are leaving rural communities across Virginia, unable to be profitable," she said. "Physicians and other practitioners generally do not choose a rural area to start their careers, so we have fewer physicians per resident than other areas of the state."

Bell, who began her term in January, said that maternal health will be a pet project, and she hopes to have some kind of pilot project underway soon. She is working with the VHRA to address the fact that no delivery hospital exists in the entire health district. She said doulas are being trained and deployed to assist expectant mothers in finding prenatal and postnatal care.

She is also concerned about the aging population, and chronic health issues like diabetes and

heart disease, and said more resources are needed to assist people with these conditions. Bell said the entire district also suffers from a lack of public transportation, and that is another concern with many older residents not being able to drive. She said that she is working with the VHRA on workforce development to address these matters as well.

Bell added that another goal is to help people in rural areas to understand that addiction is not as a failure of character but a mental health disorder.

Rural health has been the focus of Bell's work since she joined the Virginia Department of Health in 2016. She has been responsible for leading community health assessments and improvement planning aimed at the needs of rural citizens and for implementing grant-funded programs to address those needs.

Bell remains optimistic about the future of rural healthcare and said Covid is responsible for a lot of positive changes.

"Rallying municipal, hospital and other partners created strong working relationships that we now rely upon for day-to-day ac-

tivities, as do they," she said. "We created new ways of doing things that I feel are more cost and time efficient, like online meetings and some procedures, and new tools were developed, like dashboards, making healthcare data easy for the public to access. Funding from the federal government and passed down through the Virginia Department of Health, enabled us to hire community health workers, and I believe these positions will be instrumental in the future."

Bell believes that the successful

health departments are the ones that are turning themselves inside out, taking more programs and services to people where they are.

"The community health assessments and improvement plans that we lead, inform advancements identified by the people who live there so that programs and services are what they need and not what we think they need."

Bell is a graduate of Radford University (BA, 1982) and Duke University's Nonprofit Management program (2010).

Bassett man dies in Monday crash

A two vehicle crash which ended the life of a Bassett man remains under investigation, according to a release from the Virginia State Police (VSP).

The crash occurred on Monday, Feb. 12, at 11:15 a.m. on U.S. 220, near Virginia 797 in Henry County, the release stated.

A 2004 Toyota Camry was traveling south on U.S. 220, when the vehicle changed lanes and lost control. The vehicle crossed into the northbound lanes and was struck

by a 2016 Chrysler van, according to the release.

The driver of the Toyota was identified as Joshua Brandon Vernon, 44, of Bassett. Mr. Vernon was not wearing his seatbelt and died at the scene, the release stated.

The 50-year old female driver of the Chrysler van was wearing her seatbelt, according to the release. She was transported to the hospital for injuries received in the crash.

er, loved to fish and spend time with his grandchildren.

Visitation will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Friday, February 16, 2024, at Norris Funeral Services. Graveside service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 17, 2024, at Pleasant Grove Christian Church Cemetery with Pastor David Deisher officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Pleasant Grove Christian Church Cemetery Fund c/o Sharon Moore, 130 Mack Road Martinsville VA 24112, or to a charity of your choice.

Norris Funeral Services, Inc. and Crematory, Martinsville, VA is serving the Eggleston family. Online condolences may be made at www.norrisfuneral.com.

OBITUARIES

Thomas Nelson Eggleston

Thomas Nelson Eggleston, 85, of Fieldale, VA passed away on Sunday, February 11, 2024. He was born on June 4, 1938, in Martinsville, VA to the late Thomas Eugene Eggleston and Maggie Lee Nelson Eggleston. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by his brother, Wesley Eggleston and his sister, Vera Lee Martin.

Tommy graduated from Fieldale High School and was a member of Pleasant Grove Christian Church. He served in the United States Army and was President of Fieldale Insurance Agency.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Jane T. Eggleston; daughters, Karen Staiger (Marty), and Beth Davis (Mark); brother, Ronnie Dean Eggleston (Evelyn); grandchildren, Erin Brad-



shaw, Elise Staiger, Logan Davis, and Mitchell Davis. Also surviving are many nieces and nephews.

Tommy served his community as Head of the Sanitation Board while holding positions on both Suntrust and Fieldale Community Center Board of Directors. He volunteered with Fire and Rescue in Fieldale, and was a member of many organizations, including the Lions, Rotary, Ranglely Ruritan and Elks Lodge #1752.

He was an avid golf-



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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.)

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

Saturday, February 17

The Altrusa Club will meet at 10 a.m. in the First United Methodist Church, Martinsville. Dr. Greg Hodges is the scheduled speaker.

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.

A free Gospel Concert featuring the Virginia State University Gospel Chorale, will be held at 4 p.m. in P&HCC's Walker Theatre. The event is sponsored by the Fayette Area Historical Initiative, Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society and P&HCC's Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Friday & Saturday, March 1 - 2

TheatreWorks Community Players will present the first ever One-Act Play Festival, featuring three original, never-before-staged shows by three aspiring playwrights, at 7 p.m., 44 Franklin Street, Uptown Martinsville. Tickets are \$12 each and available at www.TWCP.net.

Sunday, March 3

TheatreWorks Community Players will present the first ever One-Act Play Festival, featur-

ing three original, never-before-staged shows by three aspiring playwrights at 2 p.m., 44 Franklin Street, Uptown Martinsville. Tickets are \$12 each and available at www.TWCP.net.

Friday, March 8

Music Night at the Spencer-Penn Centre, with the renowned Franklin County dance band, Twin Creeks Stringband. Gate opens at 5 p.m., 5:30 is open mic, and the band starts at 6:30 p.m. Admission is a \$5 cash donation. Concessions, including the ever popular Spencer Penn hot dogs and BBQ, will be sold.

Saturday, March 16

Beers of Ireland with the Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society and Scuffle Hill Brewing Company, 2-4 p.m. in the Historic Henry County Courthouse, 1 East Main St., Uptown Martinsville. The cost is \$10 per person. Reservations must be made by March 10, and fee paid at the door. Make your reservation at <https://jbphillips.wufoo.com/forms/beers-of-ireland/>.

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 mu-

sic 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.

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.

'Dancing for the Arts' returns in March

Rehearsals and preparation are underway for the most spectacular event in Martinsville and Henry County. On Saturday, March 9 at 4 p.m., local celebrities will take to the Martinsville High School stage to dance their way to winning both votes and the highest judges' score. Voting is open and tickets are on sale now.

This star-studded biannual fundraiser returns with a fresh slate of local celebrities dancing in support of the arts in Martinsville-Henry County. The contest features eight teams competing to win the most votes, the highest score from the judges, and a set of gorgeous mirror ball trophies handcrafted by local artist Terry Mitchell. There will be three awards at the end of the night: the Judges' Award, the Impact Award, and the Grand Prize.

Teams are coached by a team of extraordinarily talented dancers and choreographers. The teams competing in Dancing for the Arts 2024 are:

- Jewell Drewery (Realtor, Rives S. Brown) and Ouss Sahar (SSC Unit Director, Henry County Public Schools) will dance the rumba, coached by Jane Leizer

- Bonnie Favero (Preventative Program Manager, Piedmont Community Services) and Damian Wainwright (JROTC Army Instructor, Magna Vista) will dance the tango, coached by Jane Leizer

- Claudia Graham (Office Manager, Martinsville Surgical Associates) and Spencer Koger (Executive Director, Uptown Partnership) will dance the waltz, coached by Janeka Hairston

- Anna Hatchett (Art Teacher,

Henry County Public Schools) and Louis Campbell (Basketball Coach, Martinsville High School) will dance the foxtrot, coached by Stacey Davis

- Jennie Rabon (Office Manager, Rabon Law Firm) and Bobby LaPrade (Stone Dynamics and Xtreme Martial Arts) will dance the cha-cha, coached by Stacey Davis

- Tekela Redd (Service Center Director, Salvation Army) and Pres Garrett (Owner, Starling Avenue Cards & Comics) will dance the quickstep, coached by Catherine Rodenbough

- Jamie Turner (Marketing Director, King's Grant) and Justin Kline (Theatre Teacher, Bassett High School) will dance the salsa, coached by Janeka Hairston

- Anna Wheeler (Program Coordinator, Dan River Basin Association) and Jacob Frith (The Lester Group Management Program) will swing dance, coached by Catherine Rodenbough

In addition to these assigned dances, teams will perform a round of freestyle dancing in a genre of their choosing. 2022's Grand Prize winners Joyce Staples and Josh Bires-Grodenzky return for the Give it Up Dance, choreographed by Marlana Lackey. This event is not one to be missed and will be hosted by Natalie Hodge of Rudy's Girl media.

Voting is open now and will remain open until intermission on March 9. Supporters of the arts are invited to vote for their favorite teams. Votes raise money to support Piedmont Arts programming in Martinsville-Henry County. Like Dancing with the Stars, 50% of each team's final score is tallied from votes, and 50%

PIEDMONT ARTS
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Jewell Drewery • Ouss Sahar
Bonnie Favero • Damian Wainwright
Claudia Graham • Spencer Koger
Anna Hatchett • Louis Campbell
Jennie Rabon • Bobby LaPrade
Tekela Redd • Pres Garrett
Jamie Turner • Justin Kline
Anna Wheeler • Jacob Frith

Saturday, March 9
4 pm • Martinsville High School Auditorium
276.632.3221 • PiedmontArts.org

Voting Open!

Piedmont Arts' roster of dancers for this year's Dancing for the Arts fundraiser.

is tallied from scores awarded by the judges during the contest. Each \$1 donation = 1 vote. You can double your votes (\$1 = 2 votes) by applying your total donation toward a Piedmont Arts membership or renewing your membership. A \$40 minimum is required for this option.

To vote for your favorite Dancing for the Arts teams, visit PiedmontArts.org/DFTA.

Dancing for the Arts will take place on Saturday, March 9 at 4 p.m. at Martinsville High School Auditorium. Tickets are \$30 for reserved seating, \$20 for general admission, and \$5 for K-12 students. Tickets are on sale now at PiedmontArts.org and PiedmontArts.org.



In this photo by Monique Holland, Louis Campbell leaps over Anna Hatchett during a dance rehearsal.

Toys of Colonial Times to be featured in lecture series

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will host its monthly Sunday Afternoon Lecture, "Toys of Colonial Times" with Gail Vogler, at 3 p.m. on Sunday, February 18 in the Historic Henry County Courthouse.

Vogler will share her collection of reproductions of toys of the Colonial period which is the time from European settlers coming to North America at the start of the 17th century until the colonies became incorporated into the United States almost 200 years later. Toys were made of what was available – wood, string, cloth, and clay. Many of them are earlier or original versions of what children still play today, such as Bilboquet, jacks, marbles, dominoes, and dice.

Vogler, of Martinsville, is a member and historian of the Joseph Martin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She became involved with historical re-

MHC
MARTINSVILLE-HENRY COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sunday Afternoon
Lecture Series

February 18, 2024
3:00 P.M.

Historic Henry
County Courthouse
1 East Main Street
Martinsville

"Toys of Colonial Times"
with Gail Vogler

enactment with her late husband, Bob, in 1989. She serves on the Virginia Museum of Natural History Foundation Board and is an active member and supporter of Piedmont Arts. She is a recipient of the Martha Washington Medal from the Colonel George Waller Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution.

"We're fortunate to have Gail

share her collection of colonial toys," John Phillips, president of the historical society, said. "Join the Historical Society as we take a step back in time and return to the basics of childhood fun."

Admission to the Sunday Afternoon Lecture series is free, made possible by corporate sponsors, Carter Bank & Trust and



Gail Vogler will present her lecture titled, "Toys of Colonial Times," at 3 p.m. Sunday.

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

OPINION

Pesky shopping emails

In their overdone efforts to keep customers hooked there's nothing a company could do more on running us away.

Order one thing online, and your email will be bombarded with constant harassments.

My inbox is now overloaded with a constant flow of emails thanks to a recent purchase of wool socks.

It is nearly impossible to get wool socks anymore. I haven't found any in Martinsville - have you? All the sock wrappers that claim "wool socks" are, when you check the label, mostly polyester or acrylic with some pitiful amount of wool, such as 15%. Fifteen percent wool can't stand a chance to counter the fact that your feet are wrapped in plastic.

So I did an online search. Just like in the stores, that was tricky too. From one site to the next, everything that promised itself of being a wool sock turned out to be, once you read the fine print by clicking down a whole lot of arrows, just some wool with a lot of manmade fibers.

That's just not the same.

The worst is when you are busy with something - say, in a meeting for work - but need to be attentive to your emails, waiting on something important, such as an email with information you need in work.

Your phone alert goes off. This might be it.

No, it's Wacoal America, with the subject line "Lift Your Bustline Up to 1 inch. These are the bras you've been looking for ..."

How embarrassing. Did anyone see that?

"No, that wasn't Mr. Jones!" you tell everyone at the meeting.

Another ding.

Bombas sock company tells you that "Yes, You Can Hike In ..."

Macy's: "Save big on Valentine's Day gifts ..."

Duluth Trading Company (the one I really like, because that's where I ended up buying the socks): "Jump into NEW jeans!"

As I am writing this, another email from Bombas came in. I took a moment to unsubscribe from Bombas. That meant scrolling down to the very bottom of the email, looking for the smallest print. I clicked "unsubscribe." It took me to a screen. I started to click again on "unsubscribe" when up popped a box offering a 20% discount, and the box had a bar that said "SHOP NOW" in exactly the same position on the screen as I had been about to



Holly Kozelsky

click for "unsubscribe." I deftly maneuvered the mouse around in the nick of time to hit the little "X" on top to close the box instead. When I hit "unsubscribe," it put up another screen telling me I had to type in my email address so they could send me an email to "Manage Email Preferences."

Well, now I wanted to unsubscribe even more.

By the way, as much as the companies don't want to let you go from their email lists, as you probably know, it is even harder to cancel subscriptions. I'm talking streaming services, utilities and other things with recurring monthly bills. Sure, you can sign up for anything as easy as pie, but it's harder to get out of a subscription than it is to crawl your way out of a 35-acre corn maze. I have a solution for that. Get subscriptions with a reloadable bank card. When you don't want the subscription anymore, just don't put any more money on that card.

There's another way too, a bit more of a hassle but it certainly clears the slate. Make payments from a bank card - don't give the actual account number, just the bank card number. When you are issued a new card, or if you cancel the card to get a new one, none of those subscriptions get payment. You do have to go in and resubmit payment for everything you want to keep, but you are finally free of anything you don't want to keep.

Of course, be prepared for a bombardment of emails from companies saying they want you back!

Here's what companies that overdo it with the emailing don't seem to realize: If you like the product, a gentle reminder or some incentive of a sale every now and then - say, once a month - might just perk us up.

Say it's a cold day, but your feet have been warm and toasty in your 100% wool socks. The rest of you was suffering in the cold, your fingertips are blue, and your nose is red, but your feet feel great.

An email from the sock company comes in, and you realize, "Yes! Thank goodness for these socks! I must get more!"

Yet that's not going to happen, because you unsubscribed from those emails weeks or months ago.

FDA's Foreign Drug Inspection Program

I recently chaired a hearing in the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, in which we examined the effectiveness, and shortcomings, of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) foreign drug inspection program.

Since 1955, the FDA has conducted international inspections on products regulated by the agency to ensure foreign facilities, laboratories, processing sites, etc. comply with U.S. law.

As according to the FDA, Americans should have confidence that products manufactured outside the U.S. meet the same safety and quality standards as those manufactured domestically.

But, in the program's current state, this is far from the case. In fact, the FDA's lack of foreign inspections is alarming, and its consequences can be deadly.

The Subcommittee held a hearing on this subject in December 2019 in which we discussed a number of issues with the program. For example, all of the FDA's foreign inspections were pre-announced, giving foreign facilities 10-12 weeks advanced notification (U.S. facilities do not get advanced notification). And even with prior notification, the FDA found deficiencies during 66% of foreign inspections, including serious deficiencies in 16% of those inspections.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges with the program only increased.

From March 2020 through February 2022, the program essentially ceased functioning. For example, from March to October 1, 2020, the agency performed only three foreign inspections. In 2018 and 2019, the agency performed more than 600 inspections during that same time period.

Additionally, pre-announced in-person inspections were replaced by zoom calls.

Though zoom certainly has its benefits, what do inspectors miss when they aren't on site to see the interworking of how a facility is being operated?

Over zoom they cannot see if a rat skitters across the floor or if documents are being destroyed in a barrel out back.

Currently, I am most concerned by the FDA's lack of inspections in India and China, as these two countries comprise the majority of foreign manufacturing sites of generic drugs on the U.S. market.

In a recent analysis of data by ProPublica, it was shown that the FDA only inspected three percent of Indian manufacturers in 2022, while in 2019 they inspected 45 percent.

As I mentioned above, this can lead to deadly consequences, as was seen in 2023, not with drugs but with eyedrops. Eyedrops produced in a plant in Tamil, India infected 81 people in the U.S. with a rare strain of extensively drug-resistant P. aeruginosa; three died and eight were



Morgan Griffith
Representative

blinded. The plant in which they were manufactured never received an inspection from the FDA.

With more and more of our drugs being made overseas, this lack of FDA oversight is unacceptable.

There have also been recurrent reports of data destruction and falsification by Indian and Chinese manufacturers, which is extremely alarming.

The FDA attributes its challenges, specifically its low inspections rates, to not having enough investigators within the agency.

One idea I mentioned during our hearing, to help alleviate this problem, is to have preliminary inspectors within the agency, someone who might not meet the educational or training standards of a full-fledged inspector, but who can at least go into facilities and do cleanliness inspections.

These preliminary inspectors can be people who have just graduated college or those who have a desire to see different parts of the world. They can be paid a low-cost stipend while helping Americans receive safe medicines. After a few weeks' training they can begin preliminary inspections of foreign drug manufacturing sites. They can then report on how clean a facility is and whether they saw anything that looked amiss. This will give the FDA information to prioritize full inspections, as a facility that doesn't have clean bathrooms and floors likely has other issues on the processing line.

Regular reviews by Congress on the current state and effectiveness of the foreign drug inspection program are essential to ensuring work is being done to improve the program, especially given the setbacks from COVID-19. I was very disappointed that the FDA did not send a witness to testify during our most recent hearing, as Congress, and Americans, should hear directly from the agency on what steps they are taking to improve the program.

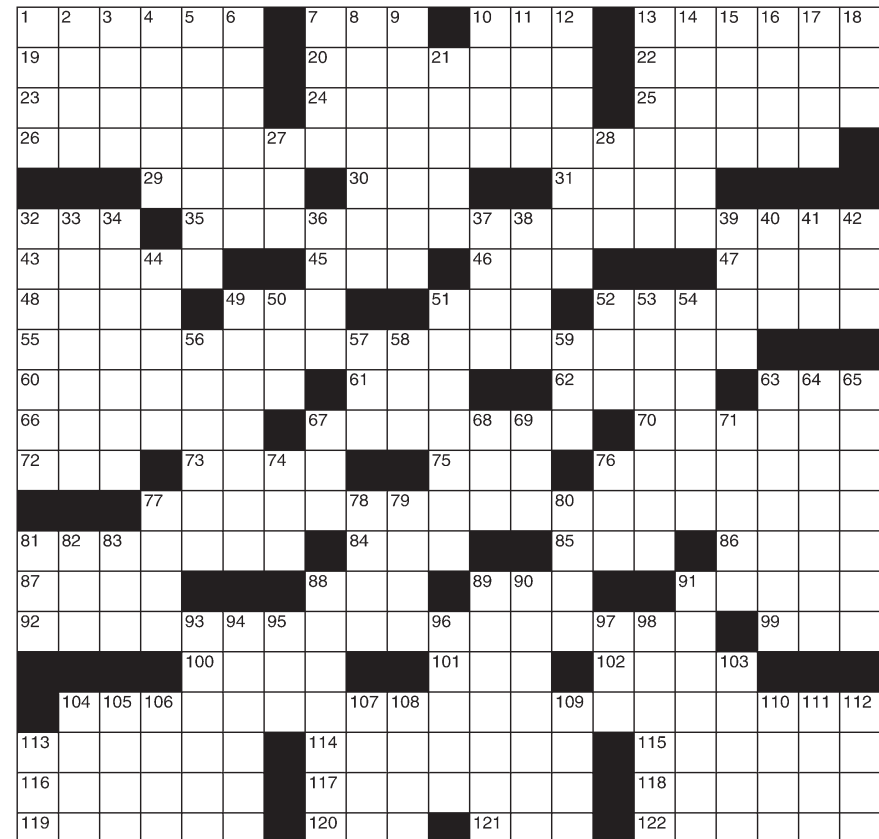
I will continue to provide oversight over the program and plan to have more hearings on the subject. If the FDA proves unwilling to work with the Subcommittee, I will move to other means within the Subcommittee's power to ensure they cooperate.

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/>.

Super Crossword

FOURTH-ESTATE FANTASY

- ACROSS
1 Not quite first-rate
7 "Patience — virtue"
10 Car tankful
13 Collie of TV
19 Cattle farm of the West
20 Trumpet blast
22 Singer and actor Frankie
23 When it's 12:00 p.m.
24 Element #3
25 Japanese city that hosted the 1998 Olympics
26 Start of a riddle
29 Japanese buckwheat noodle
30 Dr. Seuss' Sam —
31 Amo, — amas, —
32 "Addams Family" cousin
35 Riddle, part 2
43 Faint smell
45 Foldout bed
46 Co-workers of MDs
47 Stalacite site
48 Florence's river
49 Total amount
51 "Scram!"
52 Minecraft and StarCraft, e.g.
55 Riddle, part 3
60 Brief promos
62 Triceps' place
63 Pop's Celine
66 See 58-Down
66 Bullfighter
67 Riddle, part 4
70 Put a new front on, as a building
72 Unbroken
73 Recognized
75 With 59-Down, brand of frozen bread
76 Famously feisty fish
77 Riddle, part 5
81 Oval shape
84 Dejected
85 "Who am — judge?"
86 Secret writing
87 Postal pieces
88 Detectives like TV's Magnum, for short
89 Karachi's nation; Abbr.
91 Very long time periods
92 End of the riddle
99 Disloyal type
100 Impulsive desire
101 Illusionist
102 Like planted seeds
104 Riddle's answer
113 Enter very quickly
114 Novelist
115 Common gauge for toy trains
116 "Despite that ..."
117 Gets smaller
118 "Happy Days" actress Ross
119 Bunks on ships
120 Mil. ranker
121 Gym pad
122 Hole to receive a lace
DOWN
1 Bird's crop
2 Trellis strip
3 "Noelle" star
4 Kendrick
5 Glasgow natives
6 Chimpanzee variety
7 "— have to wait!"
8 Got married
9 Lure for insect extermination
10 The earth as a goddess
11 Cut — (dance)
12 Pago Pago people
13 "Meteor" actor Martin
14 1972 Billy Wilder comedy film
15 Long, involved story
16 Shut loudly
17 Actress Skye of "Stranded"
18 Grammy winner Brian
21 "— the breaks!"
27 Former Egypt-Syr. alliance
28 Texter's "Holy smokes!"
32 "Let me!"
33 Bases-loaded situation
34 Lightweight kitchen utensils
36 Peak
37 Chicago daily, in brief
38 Global; Abbr.
39 Mark for life
40 Easter meat
41 Adam's mate
42 — Moines choreography
44 Bob of Tahitian skirts
49 Package delivery co.
50 Package delivery co.
51 Carpentry material for some cabinets
52 Chi follower
53 Spicy Spanish pork sausage
54 Taxonomic subdivisions
56 Become lively
57 Cheer yell
58 With 63-Across, for the time being
59 See 75-Across
63 Oven used to bake naan
64 Spiny ant eater
65 Most unkind
67 Conservation org. with a panda logo
68 Pooch's yap
69 Big blue body
71 Genre of many sitcoms
74 Wide shoe spec
76 Mining shaft
77 Higher ground?
78 "You wish!"
79 Condé —
80 User-edited website
81 Rescue squad VIP
82 "— di-dah!"
83 False story
88 Projecting curves on saddles
89 By the day
90 Huffington of HuffPost
91 So to speak
93 Wise-acting
94 Thick-skinned critters
95 Day, in Chile
96 Studly guys
97 Abbr. on a bad check
98 End a vacation
103 Mother-of-pearl
104 Surfing need
105 Cake finisher
106 Holy Week's time
107 Eldest of the Brady boys
108 Helper; Abbr.
109 For fear that
110 Half a train track
111 — gin fizz
112 Camp shelter
113 Yank's rival



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Two Bills Will be Voted on this Week

By Del. Eric Phillips

As we approach the midpoint of the 2024 General Assembly Session, I would like to take this time to thank the constituents who have visited, emailed, and called our Richmond office voicing your thoughts on specific legislation. It is a privilege to represent the wonderful residents of the 48th District.

Crossover is the day when both the House of Delegates and Senate finish work on their bills and pass on to the other body for consideration. I was fortunate that all four pieces of legislation I introduced were unanimously approved in committees. Two of these, HB 1511 and HB1512, passed the House last week and now are in the Senate. Both bills were at the request of the City of Martinsville to update certain parts of its charter and to require a referendum for any future town reversion discussion. L.C. Jones, Mayor of Martinsville, and Aretha Ferrell-Benavides, City Manager, provided comments in support of the charter changes. My other two bills, HB1445 New College Institute's workforce additions and HB1451 SOL expedited retakes, will be voted on this week in the House.

Since my last report, there has been legislation passed through committee that should cause concerns for Virginians. One such bill would allow some of worst criminals incarcerated for 15 to 25 years, to get a "second look" at their sentence by a court. This bill is very controversial, and victims and families of some of these crimes drove from all over Virginia to testify against this legislation to keep these criminals behind bars so they do not have to relive these violations over at "second look" hearings. Democrats only allowed

six minutes for the families to tell their stories. One mother, whose son died in her arms, only asked for a minute to talk and was turned away from telling her horrific story.

As a follow-up to my last report about all new electric vehicles by 2035, Democrats defeated the last two pieces of legislation that could have ended or at least delayed that mandate. Republicans presented solid information that this is not good for Virginians, and we simply do not want these cars, but the argument was still denied.

There were positive actions from Richmond last week as well. By working with other caucus members, we were able to successfully defeat several pieces of flawed legislation from becoming law this year. One bill would have banned the use of salt to treat some of our busiest roadways due to environmental protections.

Many local groups visited last week, and we had meaningful discussions about items of importance to our district. I had the privilege to meet and introduce Danville Community College Students and administration and The ARC of Southside Virginia and its clients, on the House floor. In addition, Lawrence Distributing and Danville Distributing visited to talk about legislation that affects their business.

As always, our door is open in Richmond for visits and to share your positions on legislation coming before the Virginia General Assembly. You can reach us by telephone at (804)698-1048 and by email at delephillips@house.virginia.gov. You can also track legislation and watch session and committee meetings at <https://virginiageneralassembly.gov/>.

OPINION

The enemy of the good

To paraphrase a famous quote about the Kardashian family, everything I have ever learned about televised awards shows I have learned against my will. However, when I heard about the Tracy Chapman/Luke Combs duet at the Grammys, I thought it was pretty cool.

For those who follow modern music about as closely as I do, allow me to explain. Luke Combs is a very popular country music star who was born in North Carolina and looks like the kind of guy who could tell you exactly where to drop a line if you want to catch a state record bass.

I didn't know much about Combs previously, but last week I learned that he's a huge fan of Tracy Chapman, the reclusive musical genius who rose to fame in the '80s with her song "Fast Car" on her 6X platinum self-titled debut album (which was followed by seven additional albums, all of which have been highly regarded).

Last year, Combs covered "Fast Car" and has described it as his first favorite song. That cover was a runaway success for him.

And so, at the Grammy Awards on Feb. 4, Combs, a white heterosexual male country music star, and Chapman, a queer Black woman, did a duet of "Fast Car." It was excellent, and by all accounts, Chapman was delighted with the experience and Combs was over the moon to do a duet with one of his heroes. To make things even better, the visibility of the duet has introduced a whole new generation to Chapman and her 1988 recording of "Fast Car" is currently topping the iTunes charts — plus, she's also getting royalties from Combs' version.

"You know what," I thought, "given that we live in a politically polarized nightmare world, it's awesome that all that happened. Good for them both."

Well, as it turns out, I'm a big idiot and a terrible person.

The other day, I was scrolling Facebook when I saw a post about the duet that had been shared by a friend of mine. Here's what it said:

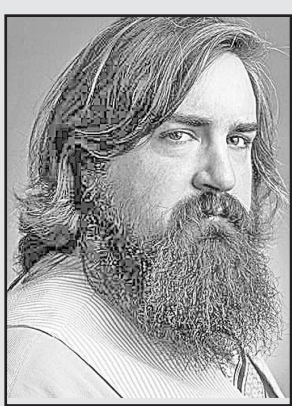
"While I appreciate the sentiment, it is also not lost on me how many white people prefer for us to return to the Kumbayah days of the Failed Post Racial Experiment. The days when a half-a\$\$ed, oops-my-bad, tokenized quick fix was considered good enough. It is not good enough. And while I am over the moon happy for Tracey (sic) Chapman getting some flowers while she is with us, let us not forget, she should have already received the whole bouquet the first time around. They gave her some dandelions when they should have given her orchids. Let us not forget this and other similar grievances. This does not fix it."

The comments agreed with this assessment, making it clear that if we aren't going to make a shift towards dramatic change, we should all just sit back down.

Folks, I am pretty progressive. I am progressive to the point that this weekly column has caused my friends and loved ones to tell me they fear for my personal safety. And I certainly don't disagree with the idea that we need a dramatic shift in race relations in this country.

Having said that, when I read this post and the attached comments that rapturously agreed with it, all I could think was, "this is why many people absolutely hate progressives."

First off, Tracy Chapman, whose name I took the time to spell correctly, is a beloved artist who has sold nearly 44 million records. She's a household name despite the fact that she makes a concerted effort to stay out of the public eye. I don't know in what sense she has not yet "received the whole bouquet." It's cool that she's gotten some extra exposure and new fans thanks to Combs' cover, but it's not like she needed it. It's also not like the Grammy Awards had been snubbing her up until this moment; she



By Ben R. Williams

first performed "Fast Car" at the Grammys back in 1989 and she's won a total of four Grammys over the years. If the complaint is that Chapman doesn't appear on TV often enough, that's because she has chosen not to (and who could blame her?) If the complaint is that she should be making more money in royalties, then Luke Combs should be praised for boosting her visibility.

Secondly, massive societal change doesn't happen overnight. It happens through the accumulation of many small intentional acts. And yes, that can absolutely be frustrating, but there's no way around it. I'm reminded of the famous quote from the late P.J. O'Rourke: "Everybody wants to save the Earth; nobody wants to help mom do the dishes."

Luke Combs is an ultra-successful country music star who did a very public duet with a queer Black woman. He had to know he was going to catch some heat from his conservative fanbase, and he certainly did. He probably lost some future record sales, but maybe he gained a few new fans. He didn't solve America's racism problem in one fell swoop, but what should he have done instead? Storm Harpers Ferry?

It's also worth noting that when Combs covered "Fast Car," he intentionally did not change the lyrics to reflect his gender; he still sings "so I work in the market as a checkout girl." The reason he didn't change the lyrics is because it would have potentially made it harder for Chapman to receive royalties from his cover.

But the most important point here is this: time and time again, I have seen my ultra-progressive friends allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good. It's exhausting. It sends the implicit message that if you can't do everything, you ought to just sit down and be quiet and do nothing instead.

There's a certain kind of progressive that I have encountered many times over the years — they're certainly not the majority, but they're out there. I refer to them as the Professionally Offended. These are the people who analyze every action in order to figure out how they can either take offense to it or condescendingly point out some flaw. What they generally have in common is a deeply-held belief that saying the right words in the right combination is more important than taking positive action. There's a term for this: performative allyship.

Performative allyship is most frequently seen in the corporate world. How many companies do you know of that have had their staff take DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) training? Realistically, that training isn't going to change the way they do business, it just means that they'll be careful not to misgender an employee while they're in the midst of firing them.

But I see performative allyship on an individual basis too, and I think it's past time for other progressives to point it out.

When someone on the other end of the political spectrum makes an attempt to extend an olive branch, you're not going to win them over by patronizing them and asking them why they didn't offer the whole tree. All you're going to do is make them wonder why the hell they bothered trying in the first place.

Center to host Southern Gentlemen



The Southern Gentlemen will perform between 10 a.m. and noon on Tuesday, March 26, at the Bassett Historical Center. The program is free and open to the public. It will be held in the Susan L. Adkins Memorial Meeting Room.

Lawmakers advance bill to teach high school students how to reverse opioid overdose

By Alyssa Hutton
Capital News Service

Bills to help educate juveniles and prevent fatal overdoses amid the opioid epidemic have advanced in the General Assembly.

The bipartisan measure Senate Bill 726 was introduced by Sen. Todd Pillion, R-Abingdon, and incorporates a similar measure from Sen. Stella Pekarsky, D-Fairfax.

The bill, which passed unanimously through the Senate, requires school boards to create a program of instruction for grades nine through 12 on opioid overdose prevention and reversal.

This type of education would include how to identify an overdose and how to administer medication such as naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose. Naloxone is the generic form of the brand name medicine Narcan.

A substitute for the bill advanced from committee and removed the requirement that such instruction be completed by graduation. Bill language now only recommends that it be completed before graduation.

Public schools would be required to have two doses of naloxone in the school and develop training protocols and policies for its use.

"While it is unfortunate that this bill is needed, I appreciate the bipartisan support for SB 726 which ensures our schools and state agencies are working together to confront the reality of dangerous and potentially life-threatening drugs in our schools," Pillion stated in an email interview.

The bill states that the state health and education departments will help develop policies and guidelines by January next year, with local school boards implementing the guidelines by the 2026-2027 school year.

Del. Briana Sewell, D-Woodbridge, introduced House Bill 732 that requires all public schools to have a two-dose supply of naloxone by the 2026-2027 school year. At least one school nurse or other employee must be trained in its administration.

Public schools are currently allowed to have a supply of naloxone and train staff how to use it, but it is not required.

Both bills include a "good faith" section to keep any employee who administers an opioid antidote, even without prior training, from any disciplinary action or civil or criminal liability.

HB 732 also has bipartisan support and has been approved unanimously by education and appropriation committees.

"This bill focuses on access and training for the use of Naloxone in schools because these programs have been proven to prevent deaths and be highly cost-effective," Sewell stated in an email.

Sewell worked with several education associations, including the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, to vet the bill and best address the challenges schools are facing.

Emergency department visits for unintentional opioid overdoses for juveniles increased between 2018 and 2022, according to data from



Narcan, which is used to reverse an opioid overdose, is available over the counter. Bills to help educate juveniles and prevent fatal overdoses amid the opioid epidemic have advanced in the General Assembly. (Photo by Alyssa Hutton/VCU CNS.)

the Virginia Department of Health. Visits increased by almost 16% for the age group of 14 and under. There was an over 13% increase for the 15-19 years old age group.

Fatal overdoses from all opioids increased last year, according to preliminary VDH data. Opioids, specifically illicit fentanyl, have been the driving force behind the large increases in fatal overdoses since 2013.

At least 10 suspected overdoses occurred this school year in Loudoun County public schools, according to a November statement from the superintendent. That means 10 students received medical treatment and four received naloxone. Four students needed naloxone the entire school year before.

There were 22 nonfatal juvenile overdoses in Loudoun County last year and almost all were fentanyl-related, an increase from 15 nonfatal overdoses the previous year.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin issued an executive order in response to the school overdoses in Loudoun County, stating that parents should be alerted about school overdoses within 24 hours. Sen. Jennifer Carroll Foy, D-Woodbridge, introduced Senate Bill 498 to codify this. It passed the Senate unanimously and heads to the House next.

Tiana Vazquez is the education specialist for REVIVE!, the state's Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Education program. The program trains people to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose. Programs like REVIVE! could train school employees to administer naloxone if HB 732 or SB 726 are passed, something that Vazquez supports.

REVIVE! training helps break the stigma around opioids, Vazquez said.

"Honestly, it can be anyone and everyone and sometimes it's just accidental," Vazquez said.

Training on opioid overdose prevention is free and available to anyone through REVIVE! Naloxone is available over the counter without a prescription.

"This is just another medical emergency," Vazquez said about an opioid overdose and the use of naloxone. "We're just trying to prepare in that way."

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.

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The First Ever
ONE ACT Festival
THREE ORIGINAL PLAYS
ONE FESTIVAL WEEKEND

One-Act Play Festival set for March

Theatre Works Community Players will present the first ever One-Act Play Festival, featuring three original, never-before-staged shows by three aspiring playwrights.

"If Walls Could Talk," written by playwright Emma Metzger is a drama following a family as the generations pass; the more things change, the more they stay the same

will be among the offerings.

"Waiting on the Train Southbend, IN," by playwright Daniel Van Nostrand, also will be featured in the festival. It is a drama wherein a group of people trying to get home are delayed at the train station, forcing them to pause and benefit from each other's life advice.

"Dating in the Time of Zombie," by playwright Chuck Smith, will round out the offerings. It is a dark comedy in which a scientist clings to normal life by attempting to hold a speed dating event, despite Zombies as constant distraction.

Performances are set for Friday, March 1 and Saturday, March 2 at 7 p.m., and Sunday, March 3 at 2 p.m., 44 Franklin Street, UP-Town Martinsville. All three plays will be performed on each date.

Tickets are \$12 each and available at www.TWCP.net.

Preschool in the Galleries teaches and entertains at Piedmont Arts

On the morning of Feb. 8, local preschoolers and trusted adults gathered in the Piedmont Arts galleries for a performance. Surrounded by the quilts of Gee's Bend, Carlisle School's youth theatre group, Zip Zap Zop, performed a selection of songs and scenes designed to teach young children about Valentine's Day, Groundhog's Day, and Dr. Seuss. Children got up and danced with the performers and participated verbally in other educational activities and stories.

Preschool in the Galleries is a series of programs for pre-K students designed to foster a love of the performing and vi-

sual arts at a young age. Performances are free of charge to students and schools and frequently feature performers from area schools and organizations. Events are scheduled regularly with more information available on PiedmontArts.org. E-mail Education Coordinator Christiana Jarrett at CJarrett@PiedmontArts.org to sign up for future dates.

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



Carlisle School's theatre troupe, Zip Zap Zop, led preschoolers through an engaging retelling of a Dr. Seuss story.



Zip Zap Zop taught preschoolers about Valentine's Day and counting at Preschool in the Galleries.

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Bills to cap rent increases don't advance this session

By Thailon Wilson
Capital News Service

State lawmakers failed to advance legislation this session that aimed to slow rising rent prices, although affordable housing remains a big concern for constituents.

Two proposed bills would have allowed localities to adopt anti-rent gouging provisions, prevent landlords from increasing rent without at least two-month notice, and set an annual allowance between 7-15% for rent increases.

Sen. Jennifer Boyko, D-Fairfax, introduced Senate Bill 366, which is dead after it was defeated in committee.

Del. Nadarius Clark, D-Suffolk, introduced House Bill 721, which was continued to 2025. Committee members raised concerns over potential problems and wanted to see some research, possibly from the Virginia Housing Commission. One member suggested a possible pilot program.

This was the third year that Clark attempted to pass some type of rent stabilization bill. The others were tabled or passed by indefinitely. The fact that the bill was not struck down shows growing support, Clark said.

"It does show that the General Assembly is ready to have conversations," Clark said. "I'm happy that the chair of that committee and the members of that committee is willing to work with me throughout this year to bring stakeholders together, to bring work groups together."

Clark represents constituents in the Hampton Roads area where 53.5% of residents spend 30% or more of their income on rent, according to a Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies report. In the Richmond and Charlottesville areas, 52% of renters spend 30% of their income on rent.

That is on par with, and in some cases greater,

than major metropolitan areas around the country, according to the report.

"This year, we're focused on rent gouging because we see throughout our commonwealth that rent has been going up in certain places 20, 30, 40, 50% and even higher in some places," Clark said. "We see that these are predatory tactics that some developers and landowners and leasing people are using."

Clark's bill advanced from the Counties, Cities and Towns committee on a bipartisan vote. It was then referred to the Courts of Justice Civil subcommittee.

There was testimony in support of and against the bill, which boiled down to renters versus property owners and managers. Virginia constituents have shared stories of how their rent jumped 33% and even higher in certain cases, according to Gustavo Espinosa with the Legal Aid Justice Center.

Espinosa translated for several speakers who offered testimony. One South Richmond renter asked lawmakers for help and to limit rent increases because "our salaries aren't going up so much."

"The rent increase has been too much," said Maria Lopez, another renter. "We have families and our salary is not enough to pay for everything."

The rent-gouging protections need to pass and Lopez said it is unjust that landlords can raise rent so much.

People in opposition to the bill testified that it was well intentioned, but would ultimately be ineffective. The state already has a housing supply issue and the bill would exacerbate it, speakers said.

Marla Posey, a member of the Virginia Apartment Management Association, has worked in states with rent control and said the bill could decrease housing supply and quality. She thinks the legislation would harm people instead of help them.

"Here in Virginia, we need policy to support adding new housing opportunities ... to be able to house

more Virginians, not enacting policy that will halt housing development," Posey said.

Rent-control also stymies other business development in locations, such as grocery stores, she said.

The bill is not a rent-control measure, Clark said. Allowed rent increases would be evaluated annually. A locality could create a board to also hear arguments for higher increases.

New properties would be exempt from this ordinance for the first 15 years of ownership, Clark said. The original proposal set the exemption at 10 years, but was amended.

If the current system was working, the state would not be short 200,000 affordable units and Richmond rents would not top New York City, Clark said.

"We clearly have a problem and the formula that we're using now doesn't work," Clark said. "This will give localities the power and the option ... to enact this ordinance ... to help people improve their lives."

"Real estate" or "construction" groups held the No. 3 spot for campaign donations, when ranked by industry, according to a Virginia Public Access Project analysis. Donations from organizations that fall under that industry totaled \$31.6 million from 2022-2023.

Affordable housing was among the top three issues Democratic voters want to see the governor and lawmakers tackle, according to a recent survey from The Wason Center.

There are a number of other housing reform bills in the General Assembly, several with a focus on tenant rights.

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.

House advances bill to ensure state minimum wage for migrant workers

By Taya Coates
Capital News Service

Lawmakers were split over a House bill to guarantee a state minimum wage for thousands of Virginia farm and migrant workers, with debate around the housing costs often included in the wage.

Del. Adele McClure, D-Arlington, introduced House Bill 157, which passed the House last month on a party line vote. The measure would ensure minimum wage pay for farm and migrant workers, which is currently \$12 an hour and could increase even more if other legislation passes this session.

Del. Phil Hernandez, D-Norfolk, is now a chief co-patron after his HB 866 was incorporated into McClure's proposal.

Over 100 members of CASA, a state and national immigrant and Latino advocacy organization, attended the committee meeting for the bills. Over a dozen individuals testified for the measure on behalf of organizations such as the Commonwealth Institute, Agricultural Workers Advocacy Coalition and the NAACP.

The average Virginia farmworker earned wage in May 2022 was \$14.81, according to Kyle Shreve of the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. Shreve testified before the House panel and cited federal labor statistics.

Employers are required by federal law to pay a minimum hourly wage rate of \$15.81 to state H-2A visa workers. But not all farms pay the average rate, according to McClure. The H-2A program allows migrants to work agricultural jobs.

"This bill simply addresses the outliers who are paying these workers very low wages and expecting very high output," McClure told House members ahead of the floor vote.

There are loopholes to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act that exempt some agricultural workers from receiving an hourly minimum wage of \$7.25. Farmers who required less than 500 "man days" of labor in



The sun sets over a field with a gate in the foreground, just outside of Richmond, Virginia. Some lawmakers are pushing for agricultural workers to receive at least the state's minimum wage. (Photo by Taya Coates.)

the previous year are exempt paying the federal minimum wage. A "man day" is anything over one hour of work. Livestock range workers are also FLSA exempt.

All farm workers are exempt from federal overtime pay, leaving the issue at the discretion of state laws, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

"The bill is an opportunity to prove the state values and supports migrant workers, and they should not be left behind for another year," McClure said.

Del. Michael Webert, R-Fauquier, was one of the 49 Republicans who voted against the bill. Webert, in committee, spoke to his years of experience in agriculture since he took over his family farm in 2007 and transitioned it to a livestock operation in 2021.

Webert expressed concern for Virginia farmers' bottom lines if higher wage regulations took effect.

"We are losing our agricultural industry at an alarming rate," Webert said.

Webert pointed out during the committee meeting that housing

costs are factored into wages. Many farm operations provide added benefits for migrant workers "over and above" the required pay, Webert said.

"What we've had across industries, we're going to mechanize and with the advance of A.I., all these people that were asking for minimum wage are going to lose their jobs," Webert said before casting his vote.

Provided housing conditions often poor, advocates say

Migrant workers are not just concerned over fair wages, but also some substandard housing issues, according to Christianne Queiroz, director of the Virginia Farmworkers Program, which is part of the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society.

There are structural problems including holes in the ground, roof and screens which allow pests into the buildings, stated Queiroz in an email. Farmworkers report housing appliances that malfunction, such as refrigerators not keeping food cold enough or stoves without some working burners. Workers also report the presence of mold in bathrooms.

"Keep in mind that all these are

common complaints for folks living in substandard housing which affect their health and safety," Queiroz stated.

Workers can be assigned a bedroom the size of a storage unit, according to the H-2A federal labor rules employers are provided. The rules require "at least 50 square feet per person" with ceilings at least 7 feet high. Other regulations include one shower head per 10 people and one drinking fountain for every 100 people.

The temperature must be at least 70 degrees during cold weather, according to the federal guidelines. But there are no regulations on air conditioning during hot weather. That could be a growing health concern with rising summer temperatures in Virginia.

Manuel Gago, co-director of the Worker Justice Program at the Legal Aid Justice Center, has assisted migrant workers since joining the team as senior farmworker organizer in 2018. Gago has visited housing camps across the state and heard worker concerns firsthand.

"Here you see the correlation between housing rights, workers' rights and climate change," Gago said.

Many farms provide portable toilets for staff. Gago described situations where 13 workers use the same portable toilet in 100-degree weather, which is only cleaned once a week.

"In many cases, the standards, even the passed standards, are not livable conditions for any person that is serving in the General Assembly or is reading this article," Gago said.

McClure's bill moved to the Senate, where lawmakers resumed discussion after Crossover Day on Feb. 13.

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VA General Assembly nixes menhaden study bill

Edwin J. Viera
Virginia News Connection

Virginia's General Assembly has killed legislation to address the declining menhaden population.

The tiny forage fish are an important part of the food chain for sea life and a source of nutrients for people. The bill would have authorized a study of the reduction in menhaden across the Chesapeake Bay. A version of the bill last year was watered down to form only a study methodology.

Jaclyn Higgins, forage fish program manager for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, said along with ecological effects, the study would have focused on commercial fishing's effects.

"They were going to look at differ-

ent impacts, like effort patterns," Higgins explained. "Where the more concentrated effort of the menhaden reduction industry is within the bay, if that contributes to localized depletion of menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay during the season."

The study would also have included economic impacts. Although the bill failed, two others are moving swiftly. Both would provide special protections for commercial fishing vessels, even for industrial menhaden boats. These are being met with opposition, since they could lead to even lower menhaden populations in the bay.

Chris Dollar, owner of Tackle Cove Sport Fishing, thinks the study should go forward, since it is designed to be a fair assessment of

menhaden populations.

"Let the VIMS scientists, Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, do their work," Dollar urged. "Do the sound science that will fill in the knowledge gaps about whether or not menhaden populations are at a level that can sustain the industrial harvest."

Other actions are being taken to fight for menhaden. Last May, the Chesapeake Legal Alliance filed a lawsuit challenging the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's standards on menhaden harvesting. The proposed regulations would have pushed the operations away from the shores of Chesapeake Bay with the hope of preventing net spills.

Without action, supporters ar-

gued, it is business as usual but unsustainable, as recent surveys find young menhaden populations are dwindling.

Chris Moore, Virginia executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, said the science can inform the state's decisions and goals.

"First of all, we have a healthy population of menhaden in Chesapeake Bay, especially in the face of climate change," Moore pointed out. "Once we're sure that we have that, we can appropriately size our fisheries."

Last year, several groups signed a letter to Gov. Glenn Youngkin calling for menhaden operations to be moved out of Chesapeake Bay, to help protect the ecosystem.

Legislation to Lower the Cost of Prescription Drugs Advances in Senate on Bipartisan Vote

Senate Bill 274 to create a Prescription Drug Affordability Board (PDAB), passed the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee last week with strong bipartisan support. The bill passed by a 10 to 5 margin with bipartisan support, and now heads to the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee.

“This legislation isn’t just about lowering the cost of living; it’s about lowering the cost of staying alive,” said Sen. Creigh Deeds, D-Charlottesville, the lead patron of SB274. “This is a major step forward towards bipartisan action to make Virginia more affordable. I am proud to stand with my colleagues to bring down the cost of healthcare in Virginia.”

In poll after poll, Virginians consistently rank making prescription drugs more affordable as one of their top priorities for the General Assembly. A recent AARP poll found that three-quarters of Virginia voters want their legislators to pass a PDAB, including 85% of Democrats, 71% of Republicans, and 70% of Independents.

“My constituents and Virginians across the Commonwealth are demanding action on soaring prescription drug costs,” said Sen. Bill Stanley, R-Moneta. “When it comes to bipartisan solutions to lower the cost of living, taking on Big Pharma is one of the most impactful places we can start.”

A majority of Virginians have personally felt the negative effects of the rising cost of medicine. In fact, Virginians are being hit even harder than people in other states; in 2020, Virginians spent 36 percent more per person on prescription drugs than the national average. Additionally, 35 percent of Virginians report not filling their medications as prescribed.

“We are pleased to see the PDAB legislation advance to the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee with bipartisan support,” said Jim Dau, State Director of AARP Virginia. “No one should have to skip doses or not fill a prescription because of cost, and for that, we are grateful to the Senators who voted to advance this commonsense legislation. Establishing a Prescription Drug Affordability Board is a critical step forward in lowering the cost of medicine for older Virginians and all Virginians.”

Del. Karrie Delaney is carrying the House companion bill, HB570, which passed the House Labor and Commerce committee and heads to the House Appropriations committee.

Deeds and Stanley and Delaney urge their colleagues to pass the legislation.

The price of prescription drugs is increasing well above the rate of inflation. Americans pay more for their medicine than any country on earth, and Virginians pay 36% more than the

national average.

In 2023, AARP Virginia polled voters of all ages and found that:

*35% of Virginians chose not to fill a prescription in 2023.

three out of four (75%) Virginia voters support creating a Prescription Drug Affordability Board.

*two-thirds (67%) of voters take prescription drugs, and half of them spend more than \$600 annually on their medication.

*63% of voters are concerned about the cost of medication.

*across party lines, voters strongly support the creation of a Prescription Drug Affordability Board (Democrats - 85%, Republicans - 71%, Independents - 70%).

A Prescription Drug Affordability Board would:

*be an independent state board with the authority to set an upper payment limit on a few of the highest-cost medications for Virginians.

*save taxpayers money by reducing state and local government spending on prescription drugs.

*help ensure affordable access to life-saving medicine for illnesses like cancer and diabetes.

*mitigate out-of-control prices set by the big drug companies.

Medical professionals urge legislators to create Prescription Drug Affordability Board

More than 100 medical professionals across Virginia have signed a letter urging lawmakers to pass legislation to create a Prescription Drug Affordability Board. Three of the signing physicians gathered virtually to share how SB274 and HB570, which are making their way through the Virginia General Assembly, would benefit their patients.

“As physicians, we cannot say this more clearly, and we hope policymakers in the General Assembly hear us loud and clear: Our patients need relief,” said Dr. Rochelle Klinger, a Richmond area psychiatrist. “Virginians are struggling to afford the prescriptions they need to live and thrive, and it’s harming their health. Because medications are unaffordable for so many of my patients, some of them pick and choose which prescriptions they fill. It requires them to decide which medical condition they believe will cause the least amount of suffering,

which pain they can tolerate the most. This is simply inhumane. And it doesn’t have to be this way.”

A Prescription Drug Affordability Board would review high-cost prescription drugs and set reasonable rates for Virginians to pay for certain medications. The Board would be an independent body of health and medical experts, using proven, data-based strategies that are already working in other states to lower prescription drug prices.

“This Board would reduce the cost of certain expensive medicines by setting limits on how much patients will pay for these medications. This is critical for patients like mine who have to choose between their medications and other necessities like rent and groceries,” said Dr. Rommaan Ahmad, a pain management physiatrist in Alexandria and Virginia Lead for the Committee. “Across backgrounds and specialties, medical professionals are encouraged

by this chance to help rein in drug costs for our patients.”

An overwhelming number of Virginia voters, across party lines, want legislators to pass SB274 and HB570 and establish this Board to rein in out-of-control prescription drug costs.

“Americans already pay more for their prescription drugs than residents of any other developed country, and Virginians pay 36% more in drug prices than the average American. Because our residents are disproportionately affected, we in the commonwealth should be leading the effort to reduce the cost of medicine,” said Dr. Greg Gelburd, a Charlottesville family physician. “Legislators have an opportunity to place their constituents’ health ahead of pharmaceutical profits by establishing this Board to review drug prices and hold pharmaceutical corporations accountable for their actions.”



100 Years Ago This Month: Historical events from February 2024

The month of February has been home to many historical events over the years. Here’s a look at some that helped to shape the world in February 1924.

· Honduran President Rafael López-Gutiérrez refuses to leave office on February 1. López-Gutiérrez cites uncertainty regarding a successor as his reason for remaining in office after initially beginning a four-year term on February 1, 1920.

· Former United States President Woodrow Wilson falls into a coma at 10:30 p.m. on February 2. The 67-year-old former president dies less than 24 hours later.

· Thanks in part to the recommendation of British physicians, Indian freedom fighter Mohandas Gandhi is released from incarceration in Ahmedabad on February 4. Gandhi served less than one-third of his six-year prison sentence for sedition.

· Forty-one miners drown in a flash flood inside an underground iron mine near Crosby, Minnesota on February 5. The flood is caused when the crew blasts too close to the bottom of a nearby lake.

· President Wilson is buried in a vault beneath the center aisle of the chapel of the Washington National Cathedral on February 6. He remains the only president to be buried in the District of Columbia.

· In response to the German Embassy’s refusal to offer condolences or lower flags in honor of President Wilson, roughly 200 taxi drivers plant an American flag on the embassy lawn on February 6.

· The Fascist government of Italy formally recognizes the Communist Soviet Union on February 7.

· On February 8, Chinese national Gee Jon becomes the first person in American history to be executed with lethal gas. Jon was convicted in a gangland slaying and was put to death in an airtight chamber at the Nevada State Prison in Carson City. Elsewhere in the United States, five inmates, each convicted murderers, were put to death in Texas, marking the state’s first use of the electric chair.

· Two-hundred fifty delegates representing 61 trade unions, civic groups and fraternal organizations attend the open-

ing day of the Negro Sanhedrin on February 11. The conference was an attempt to establish a national program protecting the legal rights of African American tenant farmers and wage workers.

· On February 13, one day after testifying in the trial of “Shoeless Joe” Jackson, Chicago White Sox outfielder Oscar “Happy” Felsch is arrested for perjury. Lawyers for the White Sox produced documents contradicting Felsch’s testimony, resulting in his arrest.

· On February 14, the Computing-Tabulating-Recording Company renames itself the International Business Machines Corporation, which would ultimately be shortened to IBM.

· U.S. Senator Frank L. Greene of Vermont is shot in the head and seriously wounded by a stray bullet during a shootout on February 15. The shootout involved bootleggers and Prohibition enforcement agents, and Senator Green was struck while walking with his wife along Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C.

· German artist George Grosz is fined 500 gold marks on February 16. The court determined a collection of Grosz’s drawings depicting the decadence of Berlin society was obscene.

· Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos resigns on February 19. Venizelos had been in office less than four weeks.

· U.S. President Calvin Coolidge becomes the first President to make a radio broadcast from the White House on February 22.

· Prime Minister Ahmet Zogu of Albania is shot twice by anarchist Beqir Valteri on February 23. Often referred to as Zog I of Albania, the prime minister reportedly survived more than 50 assassination attempts over the course of his life. Though Valteri’s efforts were unsuccessful, Zogu’s injuries forced him to step away from office for a short period following the shooting.

· On February 24, the Beverly Hills Speedway hosts its final race. The speedway is torn down as property values in Beverly Hills skyrocket.

· Trials related to the Beer Hall Putsch that occurred on November 9, 1923, begin in Munich on February 26. Adolf Hitler and Erich Ludendorff are among those put on trial.

Black History landmarks

Various locations across the country have born witness to the notable achievements of Black Americans throughout history. These are the places where musicians penned hits or where Civil Rights leaders crafted speeches or everyday individuals stood together in solidarity. Such sites merit consideration as the nation celebrates Black History Month.

· Montgomery Greyhound Bus Station: Freedom Riders were attacked by a local mob at this Alabama bus station on May 20, 1961, catching the attention of the national and international public and shedding light on the Civil Rights struggle.

· Congo Square: This location in New Orleans was one of the few places where enslaved Africans were allowed the freedom to dance and make music, making it an important location in African American history. It is often cited as the oldest Black neighborhood in America.

· Civil Rights Trail: This is a national trail that stretches across 15 states and 100 locations. Among the locations are the Edmund Pettus Bridge, which was the location of a police confrontation during the Selma, Alabama Civil Rights marches.

· African Meeting House, Boston: This small place of worship was built in the early 1800s and is one of the oldest Black churches in the country. It served as a school, church and meeting house, and Black Bostonians organized here to push for the abolition of slavery.

· Tuskegee University: This school in Alabama was part of the expansion of education for Black people in the south after the American Civil War. It is a historically Black college, which first opened in 1881 as Talladega College.

· Little Rock Central High School: This school in Arkansas is the place where the first major confrontation concerning the implementation of the Brown v. Board of Education ruling in 1954 took place.

· Colored Musicians Club: Located in Buffalo, NY, this is the only continuously operating, all-Black-owned jazz club in the U.S. It opened in 1917 and



became a place for Black musicians to socialize and play music. Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington are among the greats who have played there.

· Carter G. Woodson Home-Office: This building in Washington, D.C. is now known as the Carter G. Woodson National Historic Site. Without Woodson, there might not be a Black History Month, as he is considered the father of African American history. Woodson worked and lived out of this location when he created Negro History Week.

· Whitney Plantation: Many plantations were once places where individuals were forced into slavery. The Whitney Plantation in Louisiana is now a museum dedicated to educating the public on the history of slavery.

Many places of historical significance tell the story of Black Americans, including several in Martinsville-Henry County:

*The Fayette Area Historical Initiative (FAHI), Uptown Martinsville;

*The Baldwin Block Canvases, displayed outside the Baldwin Building (New College Institute);

*Historical markers that include the Chatmoss Historic Marker; Dry Bridge School Historic Marker; Fayette Street Historic Marker, and the recent Martinsville Seven Historic Marker;

* The Rev. Tyler Millner is pictured alongside a mini exhibit is on display at the Martinsville Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library.

Art classes tour Piedmont Arts

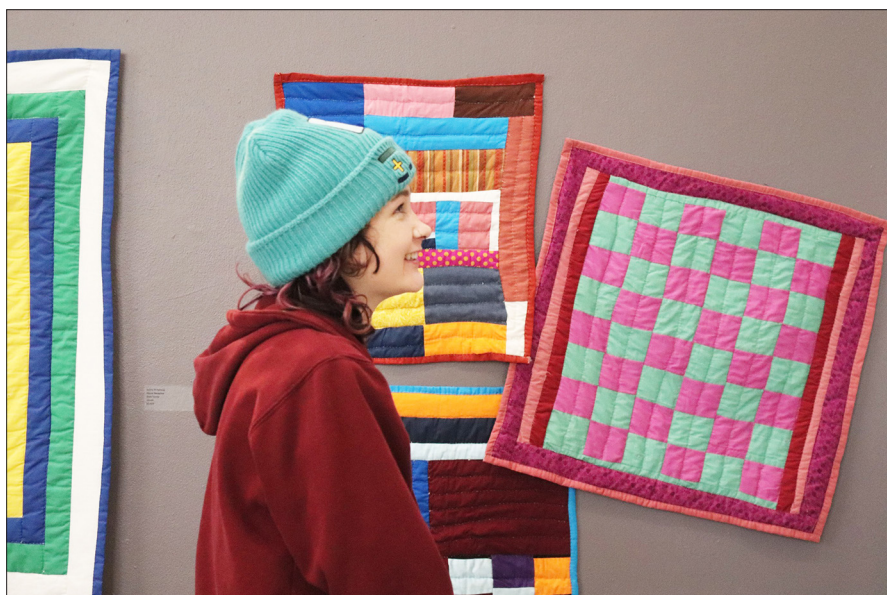
Art students from several city schools visited Piedmont Arts last week.

Students from Patrick Henry Elementary, Albert Harris Elementary, and Martinsville High School enjoyed guided tours

of all current exhibits, including “The Gee’s Bend Experience” and “Antiquity Second Hand.” High schoolers had the opportunity to tour the sculpture garden and peek inside the historic tiny post office built in

1893.

Experiences like this - that connect our students to their community - are a hallmark of the Martinsville School division’s educational experience.



The rules about leap years

It’s widely accepted that a year is 365 days long. However, that statement is not entirely accurate. In fact, it takes Earth a little more than 365 days (365.24223 days to be precise) to orbit the sun. A calendar cannot accommodate that small distinction every year. In order to ensure that seasons do not start drifting from the difference between the Earth’s rotation and the time it takes to get around the sun, leap years were established to keep the calendar more consistent and working like clockwork. The first modern leap year took place in 1752.

Certain guidelines were established to determine which years would be leap years. A leap year typically arrives every four years. However, in terms of end-of-century years,

they must be divisible by 400. That is why the year 2000 was a leap year but 1900 was not, according to Royal Museums Greenwich.

This approach is not an entirely foolproof plan since there still may be very small discrepancies in time. Leap seconds have been added to keep time ticking correctly at various points throughout the years. This occurred on December 31 in the years 2005, 2008 and 2012, and also on June 30, 2015.

In terms of adding a day to the calendar for the leap year, it is placed in February, which already is the shortest month. While February is typically 28 days, in leap years the month features 29 days. A leap year next occurs in February 2024, and then again in 2028, 2032 and 2036.



Franklin County launches apprenticeship program

The first and only Paramedic Registered Apprenticeship Program in Virginia was recently introduced by Franklin County Public Safety, The Franklin Center, Virginia Commonwealth University Health Systems, Carilion, Ferrum College and IALR to offer the only Paramedic Registered Apprenticeship in Virginia.

Franklin County, Virginia – The Franklin County Department of Public Safety, in collaboration with The Franklin Center, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), Carilion, Ferrum College and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR).

The initiative was launched on Wednesday with a Paramedic Apprentice Signing Day Ceremony. The program is designed to elevate the standards of paramedic services in Franklin County and create a robust pathway for aspiring paramedics.

By partnering with esteemed institutions like VCU Health, Carilion, and Ferrum College, Franklin County is spearheading a novel approach to paramedic training. The program will offer apprentices the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with the Franklin County Department of Public Safety while completing 4,000 hours of paid on-the-job training and more than 280 hours of related technical instruction. This comprehensive training regimen is aimed at achieving national certification and acquiring additional related credentials.

“Through IALR’s Expanding Talent through Registered Apprenticeship (ExTRA) program,

we are thrilled to have supported this new apprenticeship opportunity,” said Natori Neal, Apprenticeship Coordinator II for IALR, which, as an intermediary for the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement, helped initiate and complete the registration with the state apprenticeship agency. “This program serves as a powerful precedent for expanding apprenticeship opportunities across diverse healthcare professions.”

The Paramedic Apprenticeship Program is set to bolster Franklin County’s paramedic workforce by providing tailored training programs that cater to the county’s specific needs. Moreover, apprentices will have the opportunity to earn wages while undergoing training, fostering an internal workforce pipeline and reducing reliance on external recruitment.

“The Paramedic Program is such an asset for Franklin County citizens. It provides an excellent career with great benefits and fills the need for more paramedics,” said Kathy Hodges, executive director of the Franklin Center. “I want to especially thank our team who brought this

dream to reality: Franklin County Public Safety, Carilion, Ferrum College, and VCU Health. Franklin County’s Paramedic Program is honored to offer the first Paramedic Apprenticeship in the Commonwealth.”

Dr. Mirta Martin, college president, added, “As the College of Opportunity of Virginia, Ferrum College is proud to partner with our communities to provide the educated workforce industry seeks.”

“This collaborative effort has been a delight to observe from concept to delivery. We are grateful for this team and look forward to developing additional programs to support emergency services in the coming months,” said Dr. Jason Powell, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Chief Innovation and Research Officer at Ferrum College.

The inaugural cohort of the Franklin County Paramedic Apprenticeship Program will consist of 9 participants, 5 of which formally commenced their apprenticeship on Feb. 14, at the Franklin Center, located at 50 Claiborne Avenue, Rocky Mount.

Winter farmers markets offer fresh, local options year-round

While summer farmers markets boast peak-season produce, many Virginia markets offer local foods and artisan products year-round.

Of the 300-plus farmers markets in Virginia, more than 50 stay open throughout the winter, with some markets adjusting their schedules from summer, moving indoors or adding online sales, according to the Virginia Farmers Market Association.

“Of course you have a little less variety of produce, but we still have a great offering during these colder months,” remarked Darrius Slaughter, VAFMA vice president and manager of the Lynchburg Community Market—one of the nation’s oldest continuously running farmers markets.

Founded in 1783, the market serves as a gathering place for the community, with indoor shops, restaurants and a crafters’ gallery open to shoppers throughout the week. During the winter, the Saturday farmers market attracts up to 1,900 visitors a day with over 60 indoor and outdoor vendor spots.

Many winter markets offer artisan meats, cheese, eggs, honey and freshly baked breads, as well as hardy greens, winter squashes, apples, sweet potatoes and other root vegetables.

Shoppers also can find produce that’s grown out of season, with many farmers using hydroponic and aquaponic systems, high tunnels, hoop houses and other season-extending techniques.

Visitors to the year-round Abingdon Farmers Market can find a wide variety of lettuce grown in aquaponic and hydroponic systems in the off-season. During the colder months, the covered market opens for two hours on Saturdays, features around

30 vendors and draws an average 800 visitors each weekend. The market also offers a preordering option and accepts Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

In 2021, over \$100 million in federal nutrition benefits were redeemed at farmers markets and direct market sales nationally, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“By being able to stay open throughout the year, there’s never a time when farmers aren’t able to provide for their community,” Slaughter added. He noted an increase in farmers market sales during the pandemic, when supply chain issues resulted in empty grocery store shelves—highlighting the “importance of being able to depend on your local producers and community.”

Additionally, year-round farmers markets offer consumers the chance to “get to know your farmers, crafters and bakers and support your neighbors,” said Abingdon Farmers Market manager David McLeish.

Locally owned retailers like farmers markets return more than three times as much of their sales to the local economy, and growers selling locally create 13 full-time jobs per \$1 million in revenue earned, according to data from USDA’s Economic Research Service and Colorado State University.

The Abingdon Farmers Market, Lynchburg Community Market and others across Virginia host special events throughout the year in support of local businesses.

To find a farmers market near you, visit virginia-grown.com or use the Virginia Farmers Market Trail map at vafma.org/find-market.

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PELVIC HEALTH PHYSICAL THERAPIST



FORMAL EDUCATION : Old Dominion University, Doctor of Physical Therapy, 2007 • Chowan University Bachelor of Science Biology, 2003. **CONTINUING EDUCATION/CERTIFICATIONS:** Herman and Wallace, Pelvic Floor Level 1:

Introduction to Pelvic Floor Function, Dysfunction, and Treatment • American Physical Therapy Association Level 1: Pelvic Health Physical Therapy • Herman and Wallace, Pelvic Floor Level 2A: Function, Dysfunction and Treatment: Colorectal and Coccyx Conditions, Male Pelvic Floor, Pudendal Nerve Dysfunction • American Physical Therapy Association, Fundamental Topics of Pregnancy and Post-partum Physical Therapy • Herman and Wallace, Pelvic Floor Level 2B: Function, Dysfunction and Treatment: Urogynecologic Examination and Treatment Interventions • Herman and Wallace, Dry Needling and Pelvic Health • Herman and Wallace, Biofeedback for Pelvic Floor Dysfunction.



PELVIC HEALTH PHYSICAL THERAPY

The pelvic floor is a group of muscle, tendons, and ligaments in your pelvis which provide support for your pelvic organs, aide in bowel and bladder control, and contribute to sexual function. These structures coordinate with the bony structure of your hips and spine and the muscles of your back, abdomen, and diaphragm to provide your trunk with stability. Your pelvic floor must be able to contract and relax fully as well as respond to forces transmitted through your extremities. Injury to the pelvic floor may occur but is not always the cause of dysfunction.

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- SPINE CARE
- CLINICAL RESEARCH
- SPORTS MEDICINE OUTREACH
- PHYSICAL THERAPY

SAME DAY X-RAYS

- ORTHOPEDIC WALK-INS ACCEPTED
- SHORTER WAIT TIMES
- CASH PAY OPTION AVAILABLE



NO REFERRAL NEEDED
UNLESS REQUIRED BY INSURANCE

**2 CONVENIENT
LOCATIONS**

DANVILLE
109 Bridge Street • 4th Floor
434-793-4711

MARTINSVILLE
1075 Spruce Street
276-790-3233

MONDAY - FRIDAY 08:00 AM - 4:30 PM