

Saturday, April 13, 2024

(USPS-6)

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Input sought on proposed county budget

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on the proposed FY 2024-25 county budget during a special meeting Monday, April 15. The meeting gets underway at 7 p.m. in the Summerlin Boardroom of the Henry County Administration building.

The proposed county budget totals \$207,741,852, with input sought on setting a real estate tax rate of not more than \$.555 per \$100 assessed valuation, setting a personal property tax rate of not more than \$1.55 per \$100 assessed valuation, and setting machinery and tools tax of not more than \$1.55 per \$100 assessed valuation.

The proposal can be viewed online by visiting the county's website at www.henrycountyva.gov or in person at the Henry County Administration building.

Delegates oppose proposed electric rate hike

By Taylor Boyd

Dels. Wren Williams, Eric Phillips, and others expressed opposition to Appalachian Power's (often referred to as AEP) recent bid to increase revenues by \$95 million, or 5.1 percent, in a letter to the State Corporation Commission (SCC).

"As the regulating entity responsible for approving electric rate increases in the Commonwealth, we write to express great concern on behalf of our constituents who have been hit with significant rate increases – and now face the prospect of another if this case is approved later this year," the April 2 letter to Commissioner Jehmal T. Hudson stated.

The letter effort, headed by Del. Terry G. Kilgore, R-Gate City, compared other utilities both in and outside of Virginia and concluded that AEP customers already pay higher rates for electricity.

"Between July 1, 2007 and July 1, 2023, the average customer's bill increased more than 136 percent. As a result, too many of our constituents have to make difficult choices between food, (See Delegates p. 2)



The school board recognized assistant principals for their hard work.



Martinsville City Schools Superintendent Dr. Zebedee Talley, Jr. and Yvonne Givens meet an armadillo from Infinity Acres Ranch.

Martinsville School Board approves grant submission

By Jessica Dillon

The Martinsville School Board approved a request to submit a grant that, if approved, would boost Career and Technical Education programs, and heard an update about upcoming SOL testing at an April 8 meeting.

Sheliah Williams, director of Clearview Early Learning Center, and Felicia Preston, director of pupil personnel and foster care/homeless for the city school division, discussed enrollment in pre-school and kindergarten.

"We are looking to have 36 available spots for our three-year-olds and 68 available slots for our four-year-olds," Williams said about pre-school registration. Children who will turn three or four by September 30 and live in the city are eligible to enroll in the Clearview Early Learning Center preschool program.

Applications can be picked up at the center or on the division's website. Interested families can call 276-403-5800 for more information.

Kindergarten registration also is coming up, with a special event held at the school board office on April 23 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to help families enroll.

"We will have a nurse here that day that will check immunizations and physicals to make sure that you are all set before August," said Preston. Those with questions can call Preston at (276) 403-5833.

When discussing SOL testing, Dr. Angilee Downing, assistant superintendent of instruction, said, "Our students and staff have been working hard all year and we are in that final quarter, that last push to the end of the school year."

The SOL testing window will open on April 22 and will run until the end of the school year. Downing has been meeting with teachers to go over simulation testing to see where support is needed.

"It's a moving target," Schools Superintendent Dr. Zebedee Talley, Jr., said about SOL testing and the changes it has undergone.

Shauna Hines, coordinator of STEAM, CTE, and fine arts, discussed the Perkins Grant that would benefit the Career and Technical Development programs. The grant includes a combined total of \$28,360.54 for professional development for career and technical development teachers. The grant would allow for the implementation of school-based enterprises in the local community that would support economically disadvantaged English learners and disabled, and non-traditional students.

The purchase of 30 laptops with a locked cart for the high school CTE courses would further help these students and cost \$19,200. The final part of the special population funding is \$9,000 (See School Board p. 2)

Growth and Opportunity Center offers new opportunities

By Jessica Dillon

The Growth and Opportunity Center, located at 311 Brown St., Martinsville, opened in February to focus on resources that promote a healthy family environment and reduce child abuse and neglect in the area.

Kaneshia Coles, the coordinator at the center, has been hard at work to make the center a success and outreach to the local community, with current offerings that include a Drop-In-Play event twice a week and plans for future programming, including cooking classes.

Drop-In-Play supports children from birth to 4 years of age who need a safe place to socialize. Parents are required to stay with their children and encouraged to play along with them. Parents with multiple children are welcome, and the service is free.

"We plan to highlight different resources during Drop-In-Play," to ensure the play sessions are helpful to parents, Coles said. A sampling of the topics covered are financial literacy. The center also distributes information about Medicaid.

Its Ages and Stages Questionnaire screening is also available during play sessions to detect learning delays often associated with autism. The screening helps parents identify areas their child needs to work on before they reach school age.

The drop-in service is held from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Mondays and Tuesdays from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Registration is required.

Child engagement is just one of the many services offered by the center, which is a United Way initiative. The agency aims to identify families that have fallen into a cycle of poverty and direct them to resources that will help them take steps toward a healthier life.

"We take on a two-generation approach, meaning we're not just looking at the parents or the child. We are looking at the entire family," said Coles.

Food boxes are currently available to help families who have run into food insecurity. The center has partnered with the Virginia Workforce Development to help parents find employment that will further reduce the family's financial burden. The center also hopes to increase the



Kaneshia Coles shows off toys that are available for children to play with at the United Way's Growth and Opportunity Center.

number of children who stay with their parents, by providing knowledge about lesser-known caveats like the now-legal recreational use of marijuana that, when used around children, could cause family separation.

Family separation can lead to many children being raised by grandparents or other family members, who then need additional support to go through the child-rearing process. Resources have been created

to help these families, such as the non-profit Just Call Granny, which works alongside the United Way to provide community support.

The center's first community listening session was held at Albert Harris Elementary School and provided an idea of which programs to start initially.

"The programs that will be run through the family resource center are based on community feedback," said Coles, adding the feedback has already led the center to start planning a cooking class to educate parents on making healthy meals at home.

The center will continue to add more events over the coming months. More information about the center can be provided by calling 276-403-3516.

Parents interested in the Drop-In-Play event can speak with the center about special accommodations and registration.

The United Way has an active Facebook page that parents can follow for easy access to future announcements.



Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper escorted a handcuffed Troy Selberg into the Speedway Service Center for a mock trial last week.

Franklin County's crown as Moonshine Capital untarnished after Speedweek festivities

By Jessica Dillon

When a handcuffed Troy Selberg stepped from a patrol vehicle on April 4, he was escorted into the Speedway Service Center by Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper, where former NASCAR driver Joey Arrington was among those calling for an impromptu trial to determine whether Wilkes County, N.C. or Franklin County, Va., was the true 'Moonshine Capital of the World.'

Arrington, owner of the center, and others planned the event as part of NASCAR Speedweek, to help renew race week excitement from the past by bringing it to Uptown Martinsville. Several officials participated, including former Congressman Virgil H. Goode, Jr., State Sen.

William Stanley, Dels. Eric Phillips and Will Davis, Henry Law, owner of Law's Choice Whiskey, and Dr. Joe Kieper from the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

Selberg, a former NASCAR crew chief and owner of the Whisky Tango Charlie podcast, was whisked through the gallery of racing memorabilia and retired race cars to the area that had been set up for the trial.

Selberg, also a former County Commissioner, represented himself and his county.

"Anyone who is following history or knows that history is being erased would know that the Smokey Mountains of North Carolina are named after all the stills in Wilkes County that

caused the smoke," he said.

To refute Selberg's claims, Goode called Roddey Moore, past director of the Blue Ridge Institute, to talk about the history of Franklin County

(See Moonshine p. 3)

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 FOR MORE UPDATES



Delegates

(cont. from page 1)

medicine, and heating or cooling their homes,” the letter stated. “While we recognize that certain unique conditions exist throughout Appalachian Power’s service territory and the cost of doing business continues to rise, we implore the SCC to consider the totality of the impact of recent and proposed increases on ratepayers.”

“We have seen rate increase after rate increase after rate increase, and it’s very frustrating because the majority of it is added costs based on regulations and other things passed in the General Assembly over the last couple of years,” Williams, R-Stuart, said of the letter that is intended to advocate for constituents - AEP ratepayers.

Phillips, R-Martinsville, said he signed the letter because he believes energy costs are the number one constituent issue that every delegate is hearing about.

“Just the seemingly ever-increasing rise in the cost of electricity. In 16 years, I don’t know of anything that’s gone up 140 percent besides power,” he said. At some point, the rising electricity costs are pricing people out of being able to have “what’s become a modern basic necessity.”

Electricity is not only used for heating and cooling homes but “it’s how people cook, it’s how they keep their food refrigerated. It’s something that we all need and have to have” Phillips said. “We’ve really got to start looking at ways to rein in that cost.”

Williams said AEP had two rate increases last year – the most recent in December.

To help alleviate the sting around the holidays, Williams said he introduced a bill that would have frozen the rates for a year and a half instead of having them hit in December when ratepayers “feel it really hard between Thanksgiving and Christmas when everybody’s in the red on their credit cards” and dealing with “the cold winter.”

His proposal would have staved off the increase until spring.

“It would have gone around the calendar,” Williams said. “We would have skipped great changes in December, and then any rate changes would have started on March 1 of every year. Instead of December 1.”

By then, the weather is “pretty nice. It might be warmer during the day, cooler in the evening,” Williams said, and that may help cushion the blow.

Williams’ proposal did not pass the General

Assembly.

“Apparently Democrats from Northern Virginia who have zero Appalachian Power ratepayers in their district decided that it might be better if that waited another year,” he said, and added that he believes AEP is trying to recoup some of the funds spent on solar projects from ratepayers.

“They’re trying to frontload money for projects that they are required by law to do by taking additional fees from ratepayers prematurely,” he said, adding electric power companies have effectively been accused of doing this.

“What we did was basically say like, ‘you can’t keep doing this because it’s absolutely unaffordable for our constituents.’ You’re not going to fund all of your projects on the backs of our ratepayers here in Southwest Virginia,” he said.

AEP, which is headquartered in Columbus, OH, seems to be more concerned with that state and some of its more lucrative rate areas, which means “we just sort of get the short end of the stick all of the time,” Williams said.

Phillips said there are other factors in play that aren’t AEP’s fault, “like the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) that our friends on the left passed that requires zero percent carbon emissions for both AEP in 2045 and Dominion (Energy) in 2050.”

By 2030, Phillips said AEP is required to cut its total emissions by 80 percent.

“That’s a very aggressive schedule. That’s six years from now,” he said.

Phillips said the company can’t implement the new technologies for free, and there’s a cost to having solar farms and wind farms.

“You can go to AEP’s website, and it says they’re going to invest \$9.8 billion in renewable energy by 2028. They don’t have a choice but to do it because the state has mandated that they become carbon-free, in other words, no greenhouse gases at all,” he said.

Phillips believes it is an impossible task that will not happen by the allotted deadline.

“Just the scale of what they’re being asked to do is just too large. It’s too expensive for the ratepayers, but the money’s got to come from somewhere. When the state mandates, this is what you have to do, and you are a highly regulated industry, they don’t have a choice but to do it unless the state wants to fund it through taxes, or they have to fund it through rates,” he said.

Phillips added it’s already being funded

through taxes and rates. On the other hand, he said because of everything required by the VCEA, AEP probably does need to raise its rates.

“In other words, they’re kind of in a rock and a hard place. They’re not completely innocent in this, they’ve been raising their rates for a long time, but the Clean Economy Act calls out two companies: AEP and Dominion because they’re the two largest in Virginia and put them under all these regulations that they have to meet by certain dates or they’ll be out of compliance with the law,” Phillips said.

Williams said he and the other delegates who signed the letter are currently arguing with the State Corporation Commission, which sets the power rates.

“Appalachian Power actually has to prove why those rates need to be increased. Technically all of the delegates in this area with all of these ratepayers, we just weighed in with the SCC to try to push the SCC to make sure they don’t just unilaterally increase the rate,” he said.

Williams compared it to a real estate tax increase.

For instance, “It’s up to 4 percent or whatever, and people think we’re going to raise it to 4 percent. They’re asking for a certain amount, but that doesn’t mean they’ll get it or get that much,” he said.

Williams said delegates are pushing to make sure AEP either doesn’t get the rate increase or gets the least amount possible “because it’s getting absurd with the cost of electricity.”

He said there have been “astronomical bills of around \$2,000” in Franklin County for a single building. “We can’t get any discount or disparity or anything like that. We tried because we’re regionally so much poorer than Kentucky and Ohio. There’s only so much money and there’s only so much funding, and we’re just getting squeezed. It’s just frustrating,” Williams said.

At this juncture, as Republicans are in the minority in the legislature, Phillips said unless “we get our friends on the other side to agree with us” there’s very little that can be done “other than make our voices heard, try to represent our constituents in the best way that we can with things like this letter.”

“A lot of people think it’s just a symbolic thing,” Phillips said. “Well, we’ve got to do something, and this is one of the things we can do.”

School Board

(cont. from page 1)

to help pay for a career counselor at Martinsville High School to make students more aware of CTE opportunities.

Health and Medical Sciences would receive a combined total of \$5,000, with \$6,000 to support instructors in the business and

information technology department; \$2,100 for trade and industrial education to buy new welding equipment, and \$5,367 to pay teachers in the summer and after school to develop the CTE curriculum. The final \$1,200 of the grant would be spent on administrative

equipment. The board approved a request to submit the grant for approval.

The board recognized and gifted assistant principals in the division.

“It’s a tough job. The main responsibility of the assistant principal is to make sure that your principal has everything he or she needs,” Talley said.

Yvonne Givens, board chairman, noted that Tiffany Gravely will be the new director of Governor’s School.

In her presentation, Laura Steere, owner of Infinity Acres Ranch, discussed the benefit of field trips to the ranch and partnering with the schools to educate students on animals. A few animals, including a kangaroo and armadillo, were in tow to meet the board



An armadillo from Infinity Acres Ranch visited the City of Martinsville School Board meeting.

and others at the meeting.

In other matters, the board:

*Recognized Odyssey of The Mind.

*Recognized The Robotics Team.

ONLINE AUCTION

Recreational Tracts for Sale in City of Danville VA
Online Auction Ends Wednesday, April 24th, at 3 PM
Offering #1 - 356 Mimosa St., Danville, VA 24541
Offering #2 - TBD Hunter St., Danville, VA 24541

Bid Now at VAAuctionPro.com



Searching for land for sale in Pittsylvania County, VA? Check out these 2 offerings which total just under +/- 43 acres located in the City of Danville VA. The City of Danville is in Southside VA near the North Carolina and Virginia State lines. Danville is located along the Highway 58 corridor between Martinsville VA and Clarksville VA. Properties adjoin the Danville Golf Club, and the convenience of public water and sewer connections ensures accessibility for prospective residents or developers. Property is being offered in 2 tracts, so purchase one or both to get the acreage you desire! Both properties are zoned SR-Suburban Residential.

PREVIEW DATE: Friday, April 5th at 4 PM

Offering #1 - This offering includes +/-38.279 acres of mostly wooded recreational land.

Offering #2 - This offering features +/-4.655 acres of mostly open land.

Terms: 10% Buyer’s Premium will be added to final high bid to arrive at contract price. Earnest Money Deposit of \$10,000 per tract is required on the day of sale. Close on or before June 7th, 2024. Subject to seller confirmation. Property sold as is, where is with any and all faults. Buyer is expected to complete their own due diligence before placing a bid. Auction starts ending at 3 PM on April 24th, 2024. Please note that during the last two minutes of bidding, if a new bid is placed, the clock is automatically extended an additional two minutes. Be sure to register to bid early to ensure you receive notifications regarding any changes to the Auction, Bidder Packet and/or Pre-Auction offers received. Download Bidder Information Pack for complete terms and conditions, purchase contract and maps at VAAuctionPro.com.

CONTACT – Auctioneer Matt Gallimore at 540-239-2585 or email Gallimore.Matt@gmail.com. You can also contact Realtor Boogie DeHart at 276-952-5061 or email BoogieD@yahoo.com

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Blue Ridge Land & Auction Co., Inc.

Application Period Opens for AFID Infrastructure Grant Program

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) is currently accepting applications for the spring round of the Governor’s Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) Infrastructure Grant program. Created in 2021, AFID Infrastructure Grants are awarded to support locally identified investments that aid small-scale farmers and food producers in growing their operations.

Projects should directly support local food production and forestry while also demonstrating a broad community benefit. Grant funds should be used primarily for capital expenditures. Priority project areas include new and existing food hubs, farmers’ markets, commercial kitchens, and other value-added facilities such as those used for processing and packaging meats, dairy products, produce, or other Virginia-grown products.

Applications must be made by a political subdivision of the Commonwealth, such as a county, city, town, industrial and economic development

authority, or planning district commission. Grant applications must be submitted by 5 p.m. on May 6, 2024. The maximum award per grant is \$50,000.

Localities are encouraged to work with small farmers, food producers, local food systems advocates, and others interested in building their community’s local food and farming infrastructure. This competitive grant requires an equal cash match from the locality, with reduced match available for economically distressed localities.

This grant program has two funding rounds in each fiscal year. The first round is an open application period in the fall, with a target award announcement date of December 31. The second round is also an open application period in the spring, with a target award announcement date of June 30.

For more information on the AFID Infrastructure Program, please contact Genette Harris at (804) 786-1906 or at Genette.Harris@vdacs.virginia.gov.

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

Friday, April 12
Art and Cultural Committee Meeting, 1-2 p.m., Municipal Building Room 32, 55 W Church St, Martinsville

Monday, April 15
PSA Board of Directors Regular Meeting at 5:30 p.m., Henry County Administration Building, 3300 King's Mountain Road, Martinsville.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on the proposed FY 2024-25 county budget during a special meeting at 7 p.m. in the Summerlin Room of the Henry County Administration building.

Tuesday, April 16
The Town of Ridgeway will hold a called budget workshop, 6:30 p.m. in the Mayor of Ridgeway's office.

Wednesday, April 17
Planning Commission Meeting 4-5 p.m. Municipal Building Council Chambers, 55 W. Church St., Martinsville.

Events

Friday and Saturday, April 12-13
Friends of the Blue Ridge Regional Library will host a book sale in the basement of the main branch, 310 E. Church St., Martinsville. "Members Only" is Friday, from 2-5 p.m. New members can join at the door. The sale on Saturday, from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., is open to the public. Books on the Titanic & other sea voyages; lots of children & young adults; hunting & fishing; lots of cookbooks; too many to list. ALL paperback books are .50¢ & ALL hardback books are \$1, unless otherwise marked. All proceeds go back into the library system. The next sale is July 13.

Friday, April 12
DIY Freezer Jam, 2:30 p.m., Bassett Branch Library, 3969 Fairystone Park Hwy, Bassett

April Music Night at Spencer-Penn Center, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Spencer-Penn Centre, 102 Spencer Penn School Road, Spencer.

Saturday, April 13
DIY Freezer Jam, 2:30 p.m., Martinsville Branch Library, 310 Church St. E, Martinsville.

Monday, April 15
Summer Resource Fair, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., New College Institute, 191 Fayette St., Martinsville.

Tuesday, April 16
Foster Gallery Reception, 4-6 p.m., Piedmont Arts, 215 Starling Ave., Martinsville.

A program on 'The Gut Microbiome' will be presented at Bassett Historical Center at 10:30 a.m. by Bill Moorefield. Free and open to the public.

Thursday, April 18
April Silent Book Club Meeting, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., The Ground Floor, 1 Church St. E,

Martinsville.

Friday, April 19
Reptile Festival, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Virginia Museum of Natural History, 21 Starling Ave., Martinsville.

Bee Flight Festival, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Virginia Museum of Natural History, 21 Starling Ave, Martinsville.

Saturday, April 20
Spring Craft Show, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Bassett High School, 85 Riverside Drive, Bassett. Tickets are \$5. Children 5 and under are admitted free.

Bee Flight Festival, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Virginia Museum of Natural History, 21 Starling Ave, Martinsville.

Reptile Festival, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Virginia Museum of Natural History, 21 Starling Ave, Martinsville.

Spencer-Penn 13th Annual Pig Cooking, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Spencer-Penn Center, 475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer.

Earth Day Family Day, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Piedmont Arts, 215 Starling Ave, Martinsville.

Hometown Hero Night, 6 p.m., Hooker Field, 450 Commonwealth Blvd. E, Martinsville.

Victory Baptist Academy Charity Warehouse Liquidation Absolute Auction, 11 a.m., Victory Baptist Church, 90 Featherstone Dr, Collinsville.

Sunday, April 21
Martinsville Police Department Mario Kart Tournament, 3 p.m., Tequilas Sports Bar and Grill, 1051 Spruce St., Martinsville.

Tuesday, April 23
Kindergarten Registration, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., MCPS Central Office, 746 Indian Trail, Martinsville.

MHC Longwood College/University Alumni are invited to hang out with other Lancers at New College Institute, 6-7 p.m. Come with memories of your college years and ideas for continuing our regional group - whether you attended Longwood's main campus in Farmville or NCI. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, email mmargrave@yahoo.com.

Wednesday, April 24
Kindergarten Registration, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., MCPS Central Office, 746 Indian Trail, Martinsville.

Thursday, April 25
Kindergarten Registration, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., MCPS Central Office, 746 Indian Trail, Martinsville.

Pancake Day, 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Broad Street Parking Lot, Martinsville, by the Kiwanis Club of Martinsville.

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.

The Bassett Ruritan Club hosts breakfast on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 6 - 10 a.m. The cost is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children under 12. All you can eat sausage, fried bologna, eggs, cooked apples, sausage gravy, made from scratch biscuits, made to order pancakes, coffee and juice. Dine in or carry out.

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

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

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

The Blue Ridge Regional Library offers free one-day passes to the Virginia Museum of Natural History and the Henry County YMCA with your library card. The passes are good for one day and exclude special events. There is a wait period before you can check out the pass again. For more details and exclusions, visit brrl.lib.va.us.

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. Proceeds support 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.

Free in-house and online classes to help prepare for college, career, or to earn a high school equivalency or GED, at the Henry County Adult Learning Center, (276) 647-9585.

Neighbors in the Know. Join staff and volunteers in the Hylton Library at the Spencer Penn Centre for activities and socializing on the first and third Monday of each month. A different presentation and activity weekly, followed by a way to get you moving. The program is an hour long and activities for children will be provided. Every third Monday, 10-11 a.m., a music program will be provided. This free program is perfect for all ages. No registration is required.

Moonshine

(cont. from page 1)



Pictured, (left to right), Jenna Adams, Eric Phillips, Dr. Pam Cobler, Bill Stanley, and Meagan Durham.

and the investigation of the overwhelming sugar purchases used to make moonshine in Ferrum.

"I think you will agree that a lot was unloaded at the village or Henry, and in Rocky Mount," said Goode.

Law detailing his history of making moonshine, noting that "millions and millions of gallons of it were sold up and down the East Coast."

"My grandfather ran so much moonshine that they made a movie about him, ever heard of 'Greased Lightning?' (The movie) put bootlegging on the map, in-

ternationally, especially representing the southside," said Warwick Scott, grandson of NASCAR Hall of Famer Wendall Scott. "My grandfather was the first to have that special relationship with Franklin County."

Kieper called on dinosaur witnesses to help settle the debate.

According to research by his team, "The plant food that these animals used was of a finer quality than in other areas, including in more mountainous areas, and they concluded finally from this that the ingredients in Franklin County were a finer quality and



Roddy Moore (left to right), Virgil H. Goode, Jr., Bill Stanley, Joe Kieper, and Troy Selberg took part in the trial.

gave the backyard distillers a bit of an upper hand here than down in North Carolina," Kieper said.

"I think everybody out that way at some point or another was making good liquor," Phillips said of the Shooting Creek area.

The jury (also known as the audience) voted and pronounced Franklin County as the winner by a landslide.

"The event is a lot of fun and focuses on the past history of this area," Goode said. "I thought it was really listening to all the people talk about past experiences. It really indicated a big

change from the 1850s to the 1920s and 30s, and now."

Selberg said, "It's not about the juice. It's about the relationships formed, stories, and the heritage that's preserved."

"We must keep the stories and the ways of life of our ancestors alive," Arrington said. "Moonshining is part of this country's great history and a testament" to families. It allowed to put food on the table and survive during the tumultuous times of prohibition, reconstruction, and the depression.



The deadline to file a 2023 tax return is Monday, April 15. Those who need more information about applying for an extension may visit irs.gov.

What to know about applying for an extension on your tax return

The Internal Revenue Service reports that the deadline to file a 2023 tax return is Monday, April 15, 2024. The vast majority of taxpayers will have no issue filing by the deadline, but some may not be able to file on time. In such instances, taxpayers can apply for an extension of time to file.

An extension is not necessarily as straightforward as the term suggests. In fact, the IRS urges taxpayers to be aware that applying for an extension does not grant taxpayers an extension of time to pay their taxes. Failure to pay by the April 15 deadline could incur penalties, even for people who have applied for an extension. The IRS urges taxpayers to estimate any owed taxes by the deadline and submit payments for those estimates by April 15.

Extension requests must be submitted by the regular return due date.

Some taxpayers may not have to submit an extension return. The IRS notes that taxpayers in certain disaster areas do not need to submit an extension electronically or on paper. For example, the IRS had already

determined by February 2024 that Maine taxpayers impacted by severe storms and flooding qualified for tax relief. Various deadlines, including the April 15 filing deadline for individuals and businesses, were extended to June 17, 2024. Maine taxpayers are urged to contact a tax preparation professional to determine if they are eligible for the later deadline. A list of additional extensions affecting the 2024 filing deadline can be found at <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-relief-in-disaster-situations>.

Individual taxpayers, regardless of income, can use the IRS Free File (<https://www.irs.gov/filing/free-file-do-your-federal-taxes-for-free>) to request an automatic tax-filing extension. Filing that form gives taxpayers until October 15 to file a return. If October 15 falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, the due date is extended until the next business day. It's important that taxpayers filing for the October 15 extension deadline recognize that they must still estimate their tax liability on the Free File form and pay any estimated taxes owed.

OPINION

Regarding the Uptown Martinsville stop signs

Back in college, I had a wonderful professor named Dr. Mike Heller who dropped a piece of wisdom on my class one day. Dr. Heller said that whenever he learned about a situation that a whole lot of people were very fired up about, he would take a step back, pause, and think to himself, "There is probably more going on here than I realize."

When I learned that the city of Martinsville was replacing several perfectly functional traffic lights with stop signs in the Uptown area, I did my level best to adhere to this wisdom. Sure, everyone I talked to about the situation was strongly opposed to the change, but I knew there had to be a logical reason why the traffic signals were deactivated. I just had to figure out what I was missing.

Having done some research and considered all the points I had initially not realized, I have come to a tentative conclusion:

This is dumb. This column should probably be a little longer than 200 words, so allow me to go into greater detail and explain why this action was ill-considered.

For those unfamiliar, about a year ago, a committee of city employees was formed to figure out ways to enhance Uptown's accessibility. Having worked in the larger Uptown area for a cumulative 15 years, I've never found the city inaccessible, but sure, why not.

This committee determined that the city needed to be made more walkable. Recommendations included better sidewalks (sure), improved lighting (makes sense), and improved road signage (sounds great).

Somewhere along the way, it was determined that Uptown had a problem with people speeding, not to mention too much traffic. Having visited multiple cities during the course of my life, I would argue that Martinsville has the least traffic and is the most walkable of any city I have ever visited, but I'm willing to follow them down this road.

It was then determined that the best way to improve safety and walkability would be to remove five traffic signals and replace them with stop signs. According to Martinsville Chief of Police Rob Fincher, "It gets people looking around the area a little bit more, so not only are they slowing the traffic uptown, but it's forcing them to look at the businesses that are around them as they're going up. It also forces people to drive defensively because they're concerned. They don't just pay attention to their phone and wait for the light to turn green and go. They're actually looking to see what other people are doing."

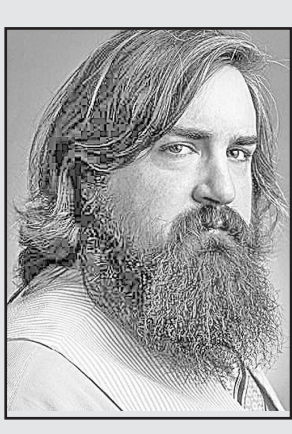
Additional articles I have read cite studies of other communities that have replaced their traffic lights with stop signs and improved walkability.

What I'm about to say will sound mean-spirited and dismissive, and that's because it is and that's the way I intend it. But this strikes me as a classic example of a phenomena I like to call, "an MBA read an article and now it's everybody's problem."

First things first, all of these changes are predicated on the idea that the average driver understands how the concept of "right of way" works. This is not the case. At least once a week when I'm driving through Martinsville and Henry County, I find myself approaching a yield sign only to see another driver I'm supposed to be yielding to stop in the middle of traffic to wave me through. The four-way stop below the old courthouse is basically just a low-speed game of chicken. We do not need to introduce more confusion to this equation.

Secondly, what is "walkability?" It's a term from the 1960s that has recently become one of the reigning buzzwords in the world of urban planning. It's basically the idea that urban planning should include more than just corridors for vehicles, but should also focus on pedestrian accessibility. I'll be the first to agree that walkability is an excellent goal for any community. Take Collinsville, for example; there are many wonderful businesses I enjoy patronizing in Collinsville, but I'd rather drive down Virginia Avenue blindfolded than cross it on foot.

I have worked in the city of Martinsville off and on since 2007. I



By Ben R. Williams

have walked all over Uptown. I have never once found this experience burdensome or unfriendly to pedestrians. As a pedestrian, I have also found the traffic signals quite useful because if I'm crossing the street while a guy has a red light, I figure there's at least a 90 percent chance he isn't going to run me over. The same cannot be said of a guy at a hastily implemented stop sign.

I'd also like to point out that as far as I can determine, there was no public hearing held regarding this change. I would have assumed a public hearing would have been required, not just as a gesture of goodwill, but possibly from a legal perspective.

But disregarding all of that, here's what galls me about this change. It's not just about replacing traffic signals with stop signs. It's about a repeating pattern of behavior that I have been witnessing over and over again for about two decades.

When I got my first job out of college with the Martinsville Uptown Revitalization Association (MURA) in 2007, there was one question on everybody's lips: what can we do to attract businesses to Uptown Martinsville? There are a whole lot more businesses Uptown now than there were back then, but it's still the main point of conversation in the city.

How does the city generally attempt to answer that question? By halfway trying a flash in the pan idea that someone heard about at a seminar somewhere, inevitably abandoning it, and then moving on to the next shiny thing.

You know how you actually promote business and tourism in a city? By making it friendly to businesses and tourists.

There was an Uptown restaurant I used to frequent about ten years ago. The owner told me one day that he was planning to add some pool tables. A month or so went by and I asked him where the pool tables were. He said that there was a line in the city code barring pool tables in restaurants unless they were on the ground level of the building, and the only place he could have put them was downstairs. He also told me that he had wanted to get a neon sign for his restaurant but he was barred from doing so because he was in the historic district.

That pool table rule was a hold-over from the days of Prohibition and speakeasies, while the heyday of neon was the 1920s, so I'm not entirely sure how historic we're trying to get here. Anyway, he closed his restaurant within a year.

When I was working for MURA, I helped out with a TGIF concert Uptown. We had rented some little wood-frame putting greens to set up in a parking lot. While the rental company was assembling the putting greens, a city official came by and asked if we had paid our \$250 "Amusement Fee" for having putting greens within the city limits. We paid the fee and never rented putting greens again.

If you want businesses to move Uptown, you don't nickel and dime them and micromanage them into oblivion. You don't change the city slogan or pick a new mascot or tear down the traffic lights. You give people some degree of flexibility to run their businesses as they see fit and make it so that if they decide to paint their front door eggshell white instead of ivory, it doesn't require a notarized letter of recommendation from the Dalai Lama.

But I don't know. Maybe there is more going on here than I realize. I'll have time to reflect on this question since avoiding Uptown adds a couple of minutes to my morning commute.

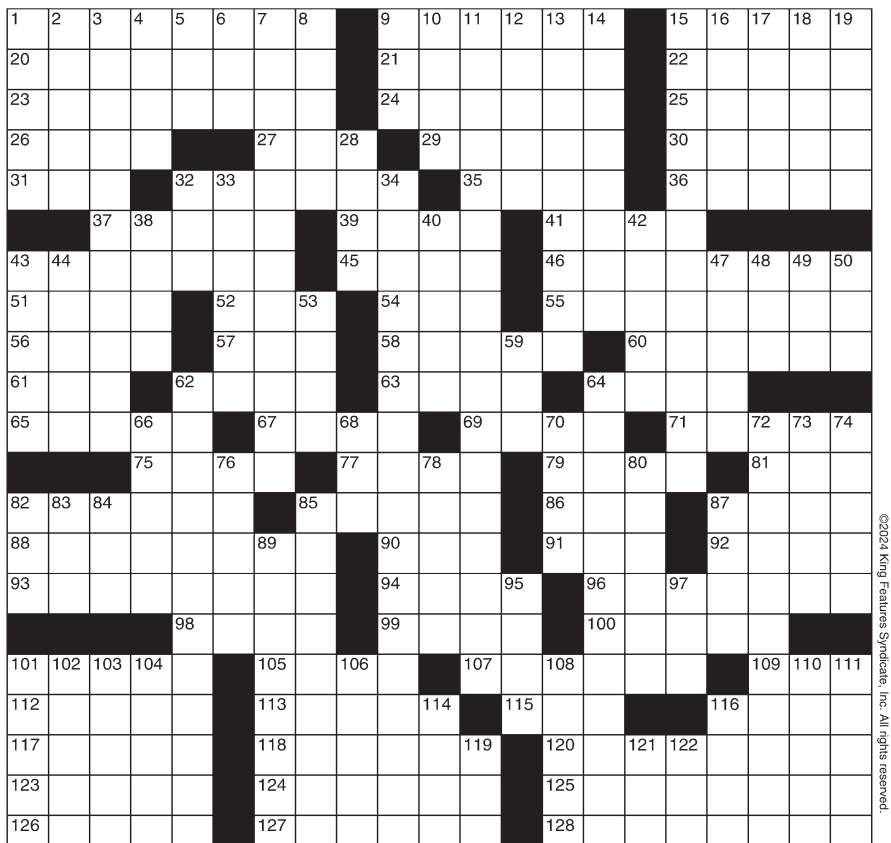
Letters to the Editor Guidelines

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

Super Crossword

CROSSWORD DIVERSION

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| ACROSS | 51 Entertainer | 81 Suffix with Seattle | 120 Rip apart | 14 Equestrian training | 72 Hora or hokeypokey |
| 1 Extreme self-deniers | 52 Nutrition std. | 82 Behind bars | 123 Justice | 15 Bit of outdated hi-fi equipment | 73 Classic arcade name |
| 9 Common proof of age | 54 "— Kapital" | 85 Bruno — (shoe brand) | 124 Distinctive film director | 16 Traveled in a curved path | 74 Smooth transition |
| 15 Plotting band | 56 Flying hooters | 86 Moo — pork | 125 Ripped apart | 17 Tennis' Becker | 76 31-Across on the sly |
| 20 Cousins of croci | 57 They have depots: Abbr. | 87 Be boastful | 126 Impertinent | 18 Astonish | 78 Viscous |
| 21 Worker whose job is fitting | 58 Father of Beau Bridges | 88 Hurting from hiking, say | 127 Meager | 19 Suit coat flap | 80 Novelist Jane Austen |
| 22 Nice smell | 60 Most bizarre | 90 Color tone | 128 Jewel box holders ... or eight features of this puzzle? | 28 — monster (large lizard) | 82 Possibilities |
| 23 Stylized bow that's a token of affection | 61 Rugged truck, in brief | 91 Gridiron stats | | 32 Lofty trains | 83 This moment |
| 24 Godly | 62 Sandy islets | 92 Pale brown | | 33 — del Fuego | 84 Java |
| 25 Fragment | 63 Napoleon's isle of exile | 93 Legume-family plant | | 34 Romantic evening meal | 85 Fulfill expectations |
| 26 Unwrap | 64 News anchor | 94 Incline | DOWN | 38 In-favor votes | 87 Really tired |
| 27 Put on fancy duds, with "up" | 65 Hebrew holy scroll | 96 "Not so!" | 1 Radiant | 40 Longtime politico Mo Xerox or Canon | 89 Sailing races |
| 29 Many Punjabi believers | 66 Plus others: Abbr. | 98 PC memory units | 2 Incline | 42 Rival of Xerox or Canon | 95 "Take it out" mark |
| 30 Take forcibly | 69 "Noah" actress | 99 19th-century Shakespeare editor | 3 Neanderthal, e.g. | 43 Political pull | 97 Beatified Fr. woman |
| 31 Marry | 70 Watson | 100 Chevy muscle car | 4 Eve's garden | 44 DIY'er's book | 101 Really years |
| 32 Cultural | 71 Chewed | 101 Farfalle, e.g. | 5 "— Tok" (Kesha hit) | 47 Build upon | 102 Teresa of — |
| 35 Many August babies | 72 Andean stimulants | 105 A8 carmaker | 6 Electrojet bit | 48 Deadlock | 103 "Boxcars" roll |
| 36 Ford bomb | 75 Title for a fictional Southern rabbit | 107 Paige of "Evita" | 7 Laundromat machine | 49 Mil. officer | 104 Cold temps |
| 37 Writer Elinor or Philip | 77 Cowboys' city, informally | 109 Gene-splicing need | 8 Make a chair of | 50 Mil. officer | 106 River mouth |
| 39 Praise highly | 79 Writer Dinesen | 112 Trellis plants | 9 "— be an honor" | 53 Mgr.'s aide | 108 Silly prank |
| 41 Toad feature | | 113 Current style | 10 Speaking stand | 55 Tasty tuber | 110 Constituent of words |
| 43 Toppings for nachos | | 115 Finale | 11 Passive resistance to laws | 62 December 25 | 114 — ex machina |
| 45 "The King —" | | 116 Colorado ski mecca | 12 Quite similar | 64 Periodic payment to a stockholder | 116 Observe |
| 46 Shakes up | | 117 Vetted | 13 "Apollo 13" director | 66 Taper off | 119 Ill. to Italians |
| | | 118 Early online protocol | | 68 Judges' org. | 121 Inclined |
| | | | | 70 Very fine rain | 122 '16 Olympics host |



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Sports Schedule

Following are the dates and times of local high school teams and their games for the week of April 15-20:

4/15	4:30p	Girls Tennis George Washington at Magna Vista		7pm	Boys Soccer Tunstall at Bassett		7pm	Boys Soccer Halifax County at Bassett
	4:30p	Girls Tennis Martinsville at Patrick County		7pm	Boys Soccer Mecklenburg County at Magna Vista (Smith River Complex)	4/18	4:30p	Girls Tennis George Washington at Bassett
	4:30p	Boys Tennis Magna Vista at George Washington	4/16	7pm	Boys Soccer Halifax County at Martinsville		4:30p	Boys Tennis Bassett at George Washington
	4:30p	Girls Soccer Carlisle at Salem Academy		4:30p	Girls Tennis Halifax County at Bassett		4:30p	Girls Soccer North Cross at Carlisle
	5pm	Baseball Tunstall at Bassett		4:30p	Boys Tennis Martinsville at Morehead		6pm	Baseball Carlisle at North Cross
	5pm	Baseball Mecklenburg County at Magna Vista	4/17	4:30p	Boys Tennis Blue Ridge at Carlisle		6pm	Baseball Bassett at Mecklenburg County
	5pm	Softball Tunstall at Bassett		4:30p	Baseball Carlisle at Blue Ridge		6pm	Softball Bassett at Mecklenburg County
	5pm	Softball Mecklenburg County at Magna Vista		4:30p	Girls Tennis Magna Vista at Martinsville		7pm	Baseball Morehead at Magna Vista (Hooker Field)
	5:30p	Baseball Halifax County at Martinsville (Hooker Field)		4:30p	Boys Tennis Martinsville at Magna Vista		7pm	Girls Soccer Mecklenburg County at Bassett
	6pm	Boys Tennis Martinsville at Patrick County	6pm	5pm	Track Bassett at William Byrd	4/19	7pm	Boys Soccer Bassett at Mecklenburg County
	6pm	Girls Soccer Bassett at Tunstall		5pm	Softball Halifax County at Bassett		4pm	Track Bassett at Floyd County
	7pm	Girls Soccer Magna Vista at Mecklenburg County		6pm	Baseball Halifax County at Bassett		4pm	Track Magna Vista at Floyd County
	7pm	Girls Soccer Martinsville at Halifax County		6pm	Baseball Magna Vista at George Washington (Dan Daniels Park)		4pm	Track Martinsville at Floyd County
				7pm	Girls Soccer George Washington at Magna Vista (Smith River Complex)		4pm	Boys Tennis Martinsville at Narrows
				7pm	Boys Soccer Magna Vista at George Washington		4:30p	Baseball Virginia Episcopal at Carlisle
				7pm	Girls Soccer Bassett at Halifax County			

Fashion blunders and wonders

The first time I saw pants sagging below a fellow's butt, showing his underwear, I assumed it was a mistake and let him know his pants were slipping.

That was in 1992, and little did I imagine that it was on purpose, and not only that, but it would remain an issue 32 years later.

I mean, really, all the other objections aside – aren't "styles" and "fashions" supposed to change with the generations, as the young people rebel against what the previous generation wore?

Granted, and thank goodness, we are not seeing as many butts now as we were doing a few years ago. That practice is dying down, but it's not gone yet.

A few days ago, as I was walking into the library I walked past a young man talking on the phone.

"Seven hundred dollars," I heard him say. (He was certainly not keeping his voice down.) "Mama want money, right? She not helping to get me money."

Yes, that's exactly what he said, because as soon as I saw him and then heard him, I thought, "a column is coming out of this," so I wrote his words down verbatim. No, I don't know what he wanted the money for, but I sure felt sorry for his mama.

I was in the library to do two or three hours' worth of research on the microfilm reader, and he was there almost as long as I was.

A little later I walked down a hallway and heard a very loud voice coming from around the corner. It was him again, still talking about wanting money. This was during the day, by the way, when a man who wants money either is at work, or at home sleeping or doing household chores – or in the library to check out books – because he works a night shift.

Even later, he came to sit down near me, still on the phone. He needed to plug in his phone. He was polite, I'll give him that, as he asked if he could pull the surge protector extension cord that was closer to where I was working over toward his direction.

Then he sat down.

That butt, covered only in a thin fabric of underwear (trust me, I saw more of that underwear than anyone needed to, and it was thin), was on the chair.



Holly Kozelsky

Alarm bells rang out!

How, in three decades of knowing the world is full of men who don't cover their butts in public, did it not occur to me that those very same nearly naked butts were sitting on chairs that you and I also sit on?

Germ and cooties!

Awful.

Now I am afraid to sit down in public.

But women are not immune to appalling pants mistakes either, as a woman at the checkout counter soon reminded me.

Women don't need to be wearing skin-tight stretchy pants, and most especially, not in flesh tones. It's not a good look. Stretchy pants cling to every bump and lump of cellulite and make the woman look naked from the bottom down.

Those women probably think they look fine, when catching a brief front-view of themselves in the mirror as they are holding their stomach in and standing with good posture.

It's quite a shock to encounter one of them in public, especially from behind. That past-middle-aged frumpy woman at the checkout counter probably had no idea whatsoever what she looked like from behind (and shame on her if she was aware and went out like that anyway).

I'm not here making fun of frumpy past-middle-aged women, either, since I am one myself. However, I dress according to my age. In fact, in the fall I bought a lovely and proper light colored pair of business pants. They looked great from the front but at the second or third time I was wearing them I realized that they were nearly flesh-colored and in horror I got rid of them right away.

I am just waiting and waiting and waiting for the next fashion rebellion. Surely after so many years of sloppy dressing, some generation at some point is going to see their only suitable rejection of the previous generation's style to be dressing decently and properly so that they actually look good.

OPINION

Government Bureaucrat's Royalties

While I travel throughout Virginia's Ninth Congressional District, one of the opportunities afforded to me is visiting our local schools.

The Ninth District is big, comprised of twenty-eight cities and counties.

It is home to more than sixty high schools.

School visits allow me to talk directly with students and listen to their questions and feedback.

Recent school visits included several in Wise and Buchanan.

One student was interested to hear about the influence of stock ownership on Members of Congress and conflicts of interest.

Shortly after entering Congress, I sold my entire stock portfolio.

As I have often joked, I don't know what my wife did with the \$6,000. The money is gone and so is any conflict.

While this isn't the course of action that every Member needs to take, I decided that the best course of action for me was to sell.

In recent years, Members from both sides of the aisle have faced pressure to sell their stocks or place them in a blind trust.

I would like to see this same pressure applied to government bureaucrats and regulators.

That is why I introduced the Royalty Transparency Act, a bill that requires an officer or employee in the executive branch of the U.S. Government to file financial disclosure reports and report royalty payments that they receive.

This legislation will empower Congressional oversight efforts of the financial disclosure filing system for executive branch employees.

U.S. Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) has introduced a Senate companion bill.

One of the reasons for this bill is that it requires researchers in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other agencies to disclose royalties they receive.

An article from Reason Magazine cites that some working at NIH over the last decade earned an estimated \$400 million in royalties from third-party companies for medical treatments and innovations they have helped produce.

However, information pertaining to how much the agency's employees were paid, who they were being paid by, or what they were being paid for has been concealed from the public.

This raises the question whether the agency and/or employees place a greater interest on profiting off of innovative medicines rather than studying and analyzing these treatments for the benefit of American science and patient health.

Last summer, NIH selected Dr. Jeanne Marrazzo to serve as the new director for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

This position had to be filled



Morgan Griffith

Representative

due to the retirement of NIAID's well-known former director, Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Dr. Fauci's career in government spans back to the '60s, when he joined NIAID as a clinical associate in 1968.

Dr. Fauci worked fifty-four years at the agency. In 1984, he became the director of NIAID, serving in that role until his retirement in December of 2022.

A whopping thirty-eight years as head of one of our leading institutions, an institution which gives out thousands of grants! In a recent transcribed interview, Dr. Fauci told us he could not keep track of all the grants and had other people to do that.

Of note, Ecohealth Alliance subawarded \$598,500 in NIH grant funds to the Wuhan Institute of Virology during 2014-2019 for bat coronavirus research.

I believe the COVID-19 virus originated from bat research at Wuhan's Institute of Virology.

From 2019-2022, Dr. Fauci made headlines for various things. One of those storylines highlighted his salary, as he earned the title of highest-paid federal government employee. In 2022, he received \$481,000, more than the president of the U.S. who receives \$400,000.

Also Dr. Fauci is set to receive the largest federal retirement package in history, with a reported first-year pension payout of \$414,000.

Additionally, Dr. Fauci and his wife, Dr. Christine Grady, saw their net worth increase from around \$7.6 million in 2019 to \$11.5 million in late 2022.

This net worth increase can be attributed in part to gifts and royalties.

Such gifts and royalties raise eyebrows.

I am not saying he did anything illegal or unethical, but as a public servant, there should be transparency regarding the money you receive directly or indirectly from government service.

I am committed to transparency and bringing potential conflicts of interest of executive branch bureaucrats and regulators to light.

At a time when Americans are losing faith and trust in their institutions, we need more sunlight on why some of our public servants are receiving large amounts of compensation.

I am trying to fix that problem with the Royalty Transparency Act.

Call my offices with questions, concerns, or comments: Abingdon, (276) 525-1405; Christiansburg, (540) 381-5671, or via email at <https://morgangriffith.house.gov/>.

IRS Scams on the rise

Tax season isn't just about filing returns; it's also prime time for IRS impostor scams. According to the Federal Trade Commission, consumers reported theft of \$5.8 million via these scams in 2023 alone. Here is what you need to know about IRS impostors so you can stay one step ahead of these crooks.

IRS impostor scams often begin with a robocall, instructing you to press a number on your keypad to talk with a live agent or call back using the number provided. Victims often trust these contacts because the phone numbers seem legitimate. However, scammers can manipulate caller ID to appear as though the call is coming from the IRS.

Once they have you on the phone, they may demand payment for back taxes under the threat of arrest. The payment of choice in these

scams tends to be via wire transfer, gift cards, or cryptocurrency. If you get this type of request, it is 100% certainly a scam.

Sometimes these impostors will claim the IRS owes you an unexpected refund in an attempt to steal sensitive information like your Social Security number or bank account details.

Even if a caller has personally identifiable information of yours to "prove" who they are, don't believe it. Disengage, and if you're concerned, contact the entity via a trusted number (a paper statement or by finding a number on that entity's website).

Report scams to local law enforcement. For help from AARP, call 1-877-908-3360 or visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork.

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All real estate advertised in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitations or discrimination based on race, color, sex or national origin," or an intention to make any such preferences, limitation or discrimination. Our readers are informed that all dwellings advertised in this paper are available on an equal opportunity basis. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate or employment which is in violation of the law.

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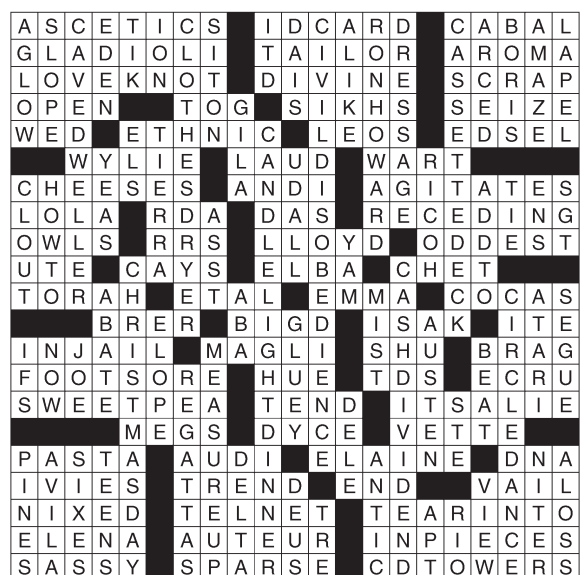
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If you've read this far, you can see how a classified ad in the Henry County Enterprise can work. Let our readers know you're hiring with a classified ad in The Enterprise for as little as \$8 a week. Call 276-694-3101 or email submissions@theenterprise.net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

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



ADVERTISE!

Virginia produce growers invest in food safety education, training

Because foodborne illness outbreaks fuel widespread concern over food safety, Virginia growers and food handlers are investing in training and education.

Fruit and vegetable producers from across the state gathered on March 26 at the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation headquarters to participate in the first Virginia Produce Safety Cleaning and Sanitizing Workshop. The program was led by representatives of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Cooperative Extension and Virginia Tech.

The full-day workshop centered on understanding the federal Produce Safety Rule, which establishes science-based minimum standards for the safe pro-

duction of fruits and vegetables. Published in 2015, the rule is part of FDA's ongoing efforts to implement the Food Safety Modernization Act passed in 2011.

"We're all in this together," remarked Ben Marshall, an FDA produce safety expert. "We're only as good as the people in the room working every single day to produce the safest, most efficient food for consumers."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated that 48 million people get sick, 128,000 people are hospitalized and 3,000 people die from a foodborne illness every year in the U.S.

Among the 250 multistate outbreaks investigated by the CDC from 2017 to 2020, 65% were linked to contaminated foods. Fresh fruits and vegetables were the most common source of outbreaks, as foods consumed raw are more likely to contain germs that cause illness.

Foods also can be contaminated by unsafe handling at home. The CDC website offers steps homeowners can take in the kitchen to reduce risk of foodborne illness. The Extension Virginia Fresh Produce Safety Team also offers a comprehensive suite of food safety resources for consumers and producers.

While food and drinks can be contaminated in a number of ways along the food chain, the workshop highlighted food safety practices that produce growers and handlers can implement to mitigate risks.

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Debbie Hall, Editor

dhall@theenterprise.net

(276) 694-3101

Wendi Craig, Advertising Manager

advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com

(276) 340-2445

Give us your view:

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

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LEGAL

Notice of Public Hearing

A public hearing for the City of Martinsville Planning Commission will be held on April 17, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the City of Martinsville Municipal Building located at 55 W. Church Street, Martinsville, VA 24112, for those parties in interest to the following request:

APPLICATION for SPECIAL USE PERMIT - Application of Tony Williams, Applicant and Owner, requesting a Special Use Permit with possible conditions, to allow for a live-work residence on property located at 1048 Independence Drive and currently zoned R-C, City Residential District. Live-work residences are permitted uses in R-C zoning districts by issuance of a Special Use Permit by Martinsville City Council.

Any comments or questions can be directed to Hannah Powell, Community Development Specialist, at (276) 403-5156 or hpowell@ci.martinsville.va.us

Notice Submitte By:
Hannah L. Powell, CZA
Community Development Specialist

LEGAL

HENRY COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE INTENT TO REMOVE AN UNSAFE STRUCTURE

RECORD OWNER:
Joe L. Perkins

Pursuant to Section 6-300 of the Henry County Code, NOTICE is hereby given that the owner shall remove the structure which might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of the County on or before thirty (30) days following this publication and failure to do so will result in the County having to remove the structure and the cost or expense shall be charged to an paid by the owner and collected as taxes are collected.

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION - Unsafe structure
OWNER - Landowner: Joe L. Perkins
PROPERTY LOCATION AND TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER -
7741 Axton Rd. - Iriswood District
Henry County, Virginia
Tax Map: 75.5(000)000/087J
Account Number - 171690000

County of Henry
Charles Campbell
Chief Building Inspector
Telephone (276) 634-4615

LEGAL

COUNTY OF HENRY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a public hearing has been scheduled for **April 24, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.** in the Sumnerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd., Collinsville, Virginia. The purpose of this public hearing is to receive citizen input into the possible issuance of a Special Use Permit for the following case:

Case S-24-02 Randy Allen Smith
A request for a Special Use Permit has been received under Section 21-302 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the establishment of a campground facility to accommodate up to 15 RV sites, 9 "glamping domes," and 6 primitive tent sites. The property is approximately 54-acres, located in the south west side of Lee Ford Camp Rd, approximately 1 mile west of Greensboro Rd, and across from the address of 1094 Lee Ford Camp Rd, in the Ridgeway District. The frontage along Lee Ford Camp Rd is zoned Suburban Residential District S-R with a rezoning application pending before the Board of Supervisors on April 23, 2024 at 6 p.m. to rezone to Agricultural District A-1. The land behind this frontage is already zoned as Agricultural District A-1. The Special Use request can only apply to Agricultural A-1 zoned property. The Tax Parcels involved in the request are 71.3(1)38-48,49A,50A,80A and 71.6/28.

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

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Regulations proposed to help manage hunter, landowner conflicts

By Shelby Warren
Capital News Service

State wildlife officials recently voted to open a comment period for two proposed regulations that could manage how hunting dogs are allowed to enter private property, and made several other recommendations.

The Department of Wildlife Resources presented on March 20 several proposals drawn from the work of the Hound-Hunters & Private Landowners Stakeholder Advisory Committee, which began in March last year.

The University of Virginia's Institute for Engagement and Negotiation helped gather data with the committee and presented its final report to the board.

The Board of Wildlife Resources made seven proposals. Two of the recommendations will have a 45-day public comment period.

The Board wants to hear from the public about a proposal to require the use of GPS dog collars for any dog used in deer or bear hunting, if the animal is not already restrained. These collars are estimated to cost between \$250 to \$350.

Another proposed regulation up for debate would require a hunter to exercise "reasonable efforts" to prevent dogs from entering a landowner's property if either the landowner or a conservation police officer has stated that the dogs are not welcomed there.

Other proposals made included hiring and better training for conservation police officers, prohibiting hunting outside of open season and enhancing education efforts.

DWR has attempted to balance the state's long history of dog hunting with the rights of property owners as tension has escalated in recent years. The agency has a collection of studies going back to 2008 on potential solutions to help with conflicts between the two groups.

The growing concern has mostly been the presence of hunting dogs on land where they are not wanted, something that has happened more often as land ownership patterns change and the state population increases.

A hound hunting permit is one possibility floated a few times in the General Assembly but never passed.

Budget amendments were submitted in the

House and Senate during the 2024 session, to create a permit system by Oct. 31. The proposed license cost was \$18, on par with other hunting license fees, according to Sen. David Marsden, D-Fairfax.

Marsden created the Senate budget amendment and has previously introduced legislation. The General Assembly passed the final budget and sent it to the governor without the permit language included.

Marsden also introduced Senate Bill 712 this year, which would keep hunters from releasing dogs within 15 feet of the edge of a state or local roadway. The bill included a misdemeanor charge, with an increasing penalty for subsequent violations. The bill had split support, and Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears cast the tie-breaking vote that killed the bill.

Marsden sees the matter as a public safety issue that pits people against each other if hunters "don't care where they release their hounds."

"So I guess that means that we're socialists," Marsden said. "We think everybody ought to be able to use anybody's property without their permission."

Robbie Shackelford, with the Newtown Hunt Club, has hunted for over 45 years. He believes the state's right to retrieve law should be upheld. Virginia and Minnesota are the only states with a law that allows hunters to access private property to retrieve hunting dogs.

"We as hound hunters treat our dogs like children and I have the right to go retrieve my children when they get in a place I don't want them to be," Shackelford said.

Hunting is a way of life for rural Virginia, but it is the people from Northern Virginia who don't like it, Shackelford said.

"But are we to stop what we're doing because one percent of the population in a rural area has got some issues?" he said. "To me, that's not fair."

This past hunting season, DWR followed up on hound hunting complaints in "hotspot" areas. They made 2,744 hunter contacts and found 128 violations. Most were handled with a warning, and 34 received a summons.

"Why is the number so low on citations?" said a Prince George landowner who identified him-

self as Richard Tetterton at the DWR meeting. "Because you don't have laws that are enforceable."

Problems will continue until laws are put in place that allow the DWR officers to make arrests, according to Tetterton.

"We have a proverbial intersection where everybody keeps having wrecks, but the local government and the government don't want to do a thing about it until somebody dies," Tetterton said. "That's what you're dealing with."

Jim Medeiros, a stakeholder in DWR's advisory committee, has experienced hunting dogs disturbing his animals, as a private landowner and farmer. A cow was giving birth in a pasture when a pack of hounds came onto his property and interrupted the birth, he said.

"So I'm literally standing over the calf as cows were running back and forth, trying to make sure they go around me and nobody accidentally steps on this calf," Medeiros said.

Medeiros is currently fighting a lawsuit against DWR and the constitutionality of Virginia's right to retrieve law. Medeiros said he has nothing against hunting, "in any way, shape or form."

"But when a person can override private property rights, you can say I'm going to do on your property what I wish to do and you can say nothing about it," Medeiros said. "That's not what our constitution is about."

Members of the public will be able to comment on the two proposed hunting regulations once the forum is open.

DWR is wrapping up some administrative housekeeping and expects to have things ready in the next few weeks, according to public information officer Shelby Crouch. The department will then notify the public about the process.

The Board of Wildlife Resources encouraged people to participate in the comment period, "whichever side of the issue you may be on."

Once the comment period ends, the Board will meet to decide if they adopt the hunting regulations.

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.

Wildlife officials monitoring increase in cases of avian flu in wild bird populations

In the past few weeks, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) has received an increasing number of reports of sick or dead birds in the eastern part of the state with the first report provided by a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in early March. Preliminary testing indicates that the likely cause is H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Confirmatory testing at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory is still pending.

At this time, infected birds have been found in the Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula and Hampton Roads regions of the state. Numerous species of shorebirds and waterbirds have been reported, but grebes, sanders, and gulls appear to be the most affected.

"DWR is working closely with our partners including the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to ensure all Virginians and agricultural producers are aware of the increased detection and can take precautions to keep themselves and their livestock safe," said John Tracey, State Wildlife Veterinarian, DWR.

Waterfowl, and some shorebird and seabird species, often show minimal or no signs of illness when infected. However, these species can still transmit the virus to other birds that may get sick or die from the infection, including domestic poultry, raptors, and upland birds. Numerous species of wild mammals have also been shown to be susceptible and infection is often associated with scavenging of avian carcasses. During the spring months, Virginia sees numerous species of birds traveling overhead as they migrate to northern states and Canada. This can increase the chances of HPAI being transmitted to local wild populations and commercial flocks.

"All Virginia poultry owners should maintain the highest level of biosecurity as wild bird migrations along the Atlantic Flyway and recent HPAI detections in waterfowl confirm that HPAI remains present in our environ-

ment," said Dr.Carolynn Bissett, Program Manager, VDCAS Veterinary Services.

The public is advised to never pick up or handle dead wild birds. If you need to handle or dispose of a dead bird, wear rubber gloves and other personal protective equipment, such as a mask and eye protection, then bury or incinerate the carcass, or double bag it and dispose of it in a landfill. After disposing of the carcass, wash your hands and clothing and disinfect your shoes. If you are frequently in contact with poultry, including backyard flocks, or other birds, you are encouraged to have separate clothing and shoes dedicated to use only in the areas where you keep your birds. Taking these precautions will help reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

The public can help monitor this wildlife health issue. If you observe any of the following wild bird occurrences, please notify DWR by calling the Virginia Wildlife Conflict Helpline at 855-571-9003 or email wildlifehealth@dwr.virginia.gov.

- Five or more dead vultures, waterfowl, shorebirds, or seabirds found in the same area

- Sick or dead eagles, hawks, owls, or turkeys, excluding carcasses found on the road

- Ten or more dead birds in the same area for any other wild bird species

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the transmission risk of avian influenza from wild birds, backyard birds, and commercial poultry to people to be low. There have been rare cases of human infection with these viruses. People who are sick and might have been exposed to animals with confirmed or suspected HPAI should isolate away from others, including household members, and contact their local health department. Your local health department can help to coordinate testing and connect you with healthcare, if needed. For additional information about prevention and antiviral treatment of bird flu viruses in people, visit the CDC's website.



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Annual Pig Cookin' set for April 20

By Taylor Boyd

The Spencer-Penn Centre's 13th annual Pig Cookin' event is slated to be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 20.

Susan Sabin, executive director, said the event is the center's biggest fundraiser of the year.

"It is free admission, so you don't have to pay. You can come by, and if you don't see anything you want to do, you haven't lost any money. You can just come play on the playground," she said.

Sabin said the event will kick off with a 'Kiss the Piggy' contest.

"We have six different board members and staff who are raising money, and the one who raises the most will open up the entire event by kissing a pig," she said, and added that will happen "right before our award ceremony for our cooking contest."

Concessions begin at 10:30 a.m. and are cash only, but some of the 35 vendors present will accept debit cards.

"We will be selling pork and chicken barbeque, along with sides,

desserts, and things of that nature. We will have a barnival which is children's activities, and that is sponsored by Visit Martinsville," she said.

Games, face painting, and other activities for children also will be offered.

"We've got our 'Pig Patty Bingo,' which is kind of like a raffle, \$15 for a ticket and we only sell 100 of them, and the winner gets \$500. You don't have to present to win that," she said.

An adult pie eating contest will start at 11 a.m. Those interested in participating must pre-register.

A cruise-in, sponsored by Valley-Star Credit Union, and Revolutionary War demonstrations also will take place.

Sabin said an open jam will occur from 12-2 p.m. on the lawn "that is open to anyone who wants to bring their instrument and play some bluegrass, or old-time music."

At 2:30 p.m., 2 Young 2 Old will be performing with the Old Dominion Collegers who will be dancing in the Alumni Hall.

‘The Infamous Weekend’ returns Sept. 19-21 at Pop’s Farm

Back by popular demand, Grammy-winning progressive bluegrass band The Infamous Stringdusters and nonprofit Rooster Walk Inc. are once again joining forces to produce The Infamous Weekend family-friendly “mini-fest” from Sept. 19-21 at Pop’s Farm in Martinsville, Va.

The second-year event will expand to three days at Pop’s Farm, the home of the Rooster Walk Music & Arts Festival. Headlined by six sets of music from The Infamous Stringdusters, this year’s beefed-up lineup will also include performances by Daniel Donato’s Cosmic Country, The Lil Smokies, The Last Revel, Dagermuffin, Jon Stickley Trio, Falco & Book play Garcia, The Wilson Springs Hotel, Isaac Hadden, Florencia & The Feeling, TC Carter Band and The Fly Birds.

Jon Stickley Trio, The Wilson Springs Hotel, Isaac Hadden and Florencia & The Feeling will each perform two sets in Virginia’s Piedmont foothills region, where late September weather is typically pleasant both day and night.

Patrons will be able to enter Pop’s Farm as early as noon on Thursday to begin setting up their campsites and preparing for a weekend of fun. Thursday’s only musical performance will be a special set by The Infamous Stringdusters

on the intimate Pine Grove Stage.

“We couldn’t be any more excited about the return of The Infamous Weekend,” said Johnny Buck, executive director of Rooster Walk Inc. “The Stringdusters are a pleasure to work with, and they’ve really embraced this event and want to grow it as their hallmark, once-a-year event. They’ve given great input in helping curate this band lineup, and they’re going to be offering their fans so many unique opportunities to meet and interact with them over the course of these three days at Pop’s Farm.”

Among those ‘Duster-centric activities include a bike ride with lead singer Travis Book to Mountain Valley Brewing in Axton, as well as several exclusive opportunities for VIP ticket holders, including a one-hour set Saturday afternoon on the waterfront VIP Stage, a “Happy Hour Meet & Greet” with the band Friday afternoon, and an acoustic fireside jam that caps Friday’s musical offerings. Other concepts and ideas are still in the works and could be added in the coming weeks and months.

Fans at The Infamous Weekend will enjoy on-site camping, food, art and craft vendors, outdoor excursions and children’s activities, among other attractions. The event’s music will primarily alternate between the Lawn

Stage and the Pine Grove Stage, while the entire venue will be open to camping and on-site parking.

Outdoors-loving music fans will also have the chance to take part in guided floats and fly fishing trips on the nearby Smith River, play a round on the free six-hole disc golf course at Pop’s Farm and take pedal boat trips on Pop’s Pond.

Last year’s Infamous Weekend drew about 1,500 music fans from all parts of the country.

“To be honest, the patron feedback from last year’s Infamous Weekend couldn’t have been much better,” said Buck. “The fans love the music, the venue, the vibe. They appreciated how easy and laid back it was to see great bands, spend time with family and friends and interact with members of The ‘Dusters. Our plan is to keep the vibe intact while making it better with small improvements and thoughtful touches.”

Tickets for this year’s event became available to the public at noon EST on Wednesday, April 10th. In addition to admission tickets, passes are now on sale for on-site RV spaces, car camping spaces, cabins and glamping packages. For more information about the event, tickets, and Pop’s Farm, visit www.infamousweekend.com.



Hairston honored in April

Henry County Sheriff’s Deputy Markevias Hairston is the recipient of the Certificate of Appreciation for April. Papa’s Pizzeria and Hollywood Cinema provided a package that includes two free meals, and four movie passes

that were presented to Hairston, along with the Certificate of Appreciation. Pictured re Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis, Markevias Hairston and Michael Jarrett, of Jarrett Marketing, LLC.

Pet Spotlight

Durk is a 2-year-old, male Pitbull mix. He is on the petite side, only weighing 40 pounds. He came to the Henry County Animal Shelter as an owner surrender due to no fault of his own. He does well with other dogs and children, and shows signs of being house-trained. The special thing about Durk is that he is deaf. He responds well to hand commands and would benefit from more training in that area.

A sweet and affectionate dog, Durk can hardly wait to transition back into being a family dog.

Visit www.facebook.com/henrycountypets?mibextid=ZbWKwL to view more pets or for more information. For adoption information, call (276) 656-4266.



Analysis shows upswing in pediatric patients seeking treatment for mental health issues

A Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association (VHHA) analysis of inpatient hospital data spanning the first quarter of 2020 through the second quarter of 2023 shows that the number of pediatric patient (ages 0-18) emergency department visits with anxiety and depression diagnoses have increased statewide. The highest volume was recorded in the first quarter of 2023, with numbers surpassing pre-pandemic levels. Virginia hospitals average approximately 3,054 pediatric emergency department visits for anxiety and depression each quarter, with most of the diagnoses related to unspecified anxiety disorder (33 percent), single episodes of unspecified major depressive disorders (33 percent), unspecified depression (17.5 per-

cent), generalized anxiety disorder (6 percent), unspecified PTSD (5 percent), and panic disorders (5 percent).

The analysis also provides a breakdown of patients by coverage type – Medicaid, commercial insurance, government payor, and self-pay – as well as patient gender proportions. The data indicates the emergency department visits during the period of this analysis skewed female (68.74% percent of visit, compared to 31.22 percent of visits involving male patients), and that the distribution skews towards older pediatric female patients between the ages of 12 to 17 (the distribution of visits for male patients is more even across the pediatric age range, with only a slight skew towards teenage years).

Arrest made in Cherry Street shooting incident

On Monday, April 8, 2024, Steven O’Neal Porter, 40, of Spencer, was arrested by Carilion Roanoke Police as part of the Martinsville Police Department’s investigation into the Cherry Street shooting on April 5. Porter was transported to SOVAH Health Martinsville with an apparent gunshot wound following the shooting. However, the circumstances of the case and the evidence recovered led to the charges filed against him.

He is charged with attempted murder, possess firearm by convicted violent felon, possess ammunition by convicted felon, and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

The case remains under investigation. Anyone with information is asked to call Crimestoppers at (276) 632-7463 or Sgt. J.L. Vaughan at (276) 403-5247.



Steven O’Neal Porter

County schools showcase work by budding artists



Artwork by students in Henry County Schools is on display in the Henry County Administration Building. The display is on the first floor of the building that is located on Kings Mountain Road.



Call 276-694-3101 or email submissions@theenterprise.net for more information.

Reptile Festival slips into Martinsville April 19-20



The annual Reptile Festival will slither back into the Virginia Museum of Natural History on Friday, April 19 and Saturday, April 20 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. The festival - which aims to educate visitors about the importance of reptiles and dispel misconceptions about these often misunderstood animals - offers festival goers the opportunity to view a wide variety of live animals, investigate reptile specimens from the museum's scientific collections, interact with reptile experts, and participate in an array of activities ranging from reptile-themed games and crafts to balloon animals and face painting.

"Reptiles are often polarizing animals that frequently receive an unfair reputation due to many misconceptions and misunderstandings associated with them," said VMNH Visitor Services and Events Manager Robbie Hendrix-Wirt. "With Reptile Festival, we want to provide visitors with an entertaining adventure while they are here, and have them leave with a much better understanding of these incredible animals."

Numerous live animals will be on display during the event, ranging from reptiles native to Virginia and the surrounding region, such as the eastern copperhead and eastern rat snake, to non-native and, quite possibly, far less familiar animals, such as the giant knob-headed gecko and Honduran milk snake. Additionally, the museum's invertebrate research team will be on-hand during the festival to provide a display of live animals, bridging two different areas of zoology that the museum actively researches - reptiles and invertebrates.

"Live animals have always been a highlight of Reptile Festival and we believe we have an exciting lineup that provides visitors with a great sampling of what they may find in their own backyard, as well as animals that they may not even realize exist," said Hendrix-Wirt.

The festival also will feature some of the region's most prolific reptile experts, including the museum's Assistant Curator of Herpetology Dr. Arianna Kuhn, who will be on-hand to help present both live animals and scientific specimens from the VMNH herpetology collection.

"Though the museum's herpetology program is young, it has already amassed an impressive collection of scientific specimens, as well as live animal ambassadors," said Hendrix-Wirt. "Reptile Festival will not only provide visitors with the opportunity to view these animals and specimens, but the opportunity to learn about them from the experts who have detailed knowledge of them."

It's not just modern day reptiles that will take the spotlight during the festival. Ancient reptiles will also have their chance to shine at the event, with a science station dedicated to the comparison of reptiles from the Age of Dinosaurs and Ice Age.

"While modern day reptile biodiversity is impressive, reptiles have been around for hundreds of millions of years," said Hendrix-Wirt. "At this year's festival, visitors will have the opportunity to interact with our paleontology team and witness fossil evidence of reptiles from times long since passed."

As with all museum festivals, interactive activities will be a significant part of Reptile Festival.

"Throughout the event, we're going to offer proven crowd favorite activities, such as face painting and balloon animals, as well as a variety of hands-on, reptile-themed activities hosted by the museum's education department, researchers, and vendors," said Hendrix-Wirt. "We'll even offer the Reptile Festival Photo Booth for folks to capture a memory of their adventure. All of this is included in the price of admission."

Numerous food options will also be available on site during the event.

"Whether you just want to grab a quick snack or eat lunch at the event, the Reptile Festival Food Truck Alley will be accessible to visitors throughout both days of the event," said Hendrix-Wirt.

Admission to the festival is \$10 per adult ages 18-59 and \$5 for children and youth ages 3-17, seniors ages 60+, and college students. Admission is free for children under 3, museum mem-



bers, and members of museums and science centers that participate in the ASTC Passport program.

The museum also participates in the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Museums for All initiative, offering discounted admission to EBT cardholders. Through this program and additional funding provided by Hooker Furnishings, Carter Bank & Trust, and the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia, visitors who present their EBT card and accompanying ID at the museum's box office will receive free admission to the festival. The free admission offer is available to EBT cardholders from any state and up to 5 of their immediate family members living within the same household.

Parking is free and will take place off-site. Details will be made available on the museum's website before the festival.

The Reptile Festival is sponsored by the Helen S. and Charles G. Patterson, Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust, Bassett Furniture Industries, Boxley Materials Company, Monogram Foods Loves Kids Foundation, and Carter Bank & Trust.

For more information, visit www.vmnh.net/events/reptile-festival.

Victim of alleged abduction held with no bond



Eyann Martin



Shamica Johnson

Henry County Sheriff's deputies responded around 8:50 a.m. on April 9 to the 5700 block of Virginia Ave. Bassett, to a report of brandishing of a firearm. Deputies quickly learned the call was an armed robbery and abduction, according to a release from the Henry County Sheriff's Office.

The victim at the scene told investigators that she was robbed of her prescription medication and that another person, Shamica Johnson, was abducted by the individual after a firearm was brandished. Investigators processed the scene for evidence and identified a vehicle of interest. Around 10 a.m., officers with the City of Martinsville Police Department located the suspect vehicle at the Valero located at 1105 Brookdale

St. Eyann Martin, 25, was taken into custody without incident, and authorities alleged evidence of the crime was seized.

Investigators allege that Martin and Johnson conspired to rob the victim of the prescription medication. Martin is charged with conspiracy to commit robbery, robbery, use of a firearm in a commission of a felony, and possession of firearm by felon.

Johnson, 36, is charged with conspiracy to commit robbery and robbery.

Both are being held at the Henry County Adult Detention Center with no bond.

The victim was transported by EMS to SOVAH Martinsville to be evaluated for minor injuries.



Left: Rebekah Morgan Right: Chasta White



WPPDC Strengthens Team with Two New Hires

The West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) recently hired Rebekah Morgan as Community Development Specialist and Chasta White as Housing Programs Specialist. These new additions further solidify the commission's commitment to driving positive change and growth within the region.

Morgan is the Community Development Specialist, bringing with her a wealth of experience and a strong background in government and community planning. Before joining the WPPDC, she was the Assistant Park Manager at Fairy Stone State Park.

She has a master's degree in public administration from Troy University. Morgan also served in the Marine Corps as a Special Intelligence Communicator/System Administrator. She enjoys spending time with her four kids and is excited for warmer weather so they can go kayaking and hiking area trails.

"I look forward to getting to know our community partners and the communities they serve while being able to assist them with obtaining grants to help fund their projects and plan future projects," said Morgan. "There is a lot of great work going on in the planning district, and I'm excited to be able to be a part of it."

White will be the Housing Programs Specialist, equipped with a proven track record in housing. Her in-depth understanding of housing programs and grant proposals makes her a vital addition to the commission's efforts in addressing the region's housing needs. White gained

valuable experience as the Housing and Redevelopment Specialist for the City of Danville before joining the WPPDC. She possesses a profound insight into Danville, having been born and raised there. She also served the City of Danville as their Senior Account Clerk and Housing Environmental and Grant Specialist. She attended Hampton University where she majored in Accounting. She likes to travel, try new foods, and watch her kids play sports.

"I look forward to creating housing in the entire WPPDC area as well as improving the quality of life to those that we serve through housing and various programs," said White.

"We are delighted to welcome Rebekah and Chasta to our team," said Kristie Eberly, executive director of the West Piedmont Planning District Commission. "Their combined expertise and commitment to community development and housing to programs will play a pivotal role in advancing our initiatives and serving the needs of our communities."

The West Piedmont Planning District is a regional planning organization serving the counties of Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania; the cities of Danville and Martinsville; and the Town of Rocky Mount. The WPPDC seeks to carry out its mission by facilitating regional thinking and dialogue among the district's local government, K-12 and higher educational institutions, economic development organizations, workforce development, and other key stakeholders. Learn more at westpiedmontpdpc.org.

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

Study details housing challenges in region

By Staff Reports

Key findings of a recent housing study in the West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) region indicate that households are facing challenges related to affordable starter homes, aging in place, and financial obstacles.

Workforce housing for low-wage workers and single-earner households was identified as a significant concern, according to the results of the comprehensive housing study conducted by the WPPDC in collaboration with the Virginia Center for Housing Research at Virginia Tech (VCHR) and Housing Forward Virginia (HFV).

The study's goal was to address housing challenges and develop sustainable housing solutions for the region. Initiated in response to concerns identified by member localities, the study focuses on several key goals:

1. Developing strategies to improve the current housing stock and create new housing opportunities.
2. Providing information to assist economic developers, local governments, and housing developers in developing sustainable housing options to meet the needs of the growing region.
3. Offering strategies to facilitate regional collaboration and coordination to effectively address housing challenges.

The scope of work for the study included a comprehensive needs assessment, market analysis, and community outreach. This involved identifying specific issues affecting local communities such as workforce housing, housing equity, aging and substandard housing stock, and opportunities for rehabilitation, among others.

Additionally, the study team conducted listening sessions and engaged with local stakeholders to

understand housing market conditions and challenges. This input helped shape the study to respond to local concerns and conditions. The study also includes population statistics, highlighting that the West Piedmont PDC Region comprises 99,190 households and a total population of 240,482. The region faces common housing challenges that lend themselves to regional initiatives and approaches to housing solutions.

"We are excited to present the findings of this comprehensive housing study, which will serve as a valuable resource for addressing the housing needs of the West Piedmont Planning District," stated Sean Campbell, Housing Director for the WPPDC. "The collaborative efforts with the West Piedmont Planning District Commission, Virginia Tech, and Housing Forward Virginia have allowed us to develop tailored strategies that will positively impact our region's housing landscape."

The study's final phase involved the development of tailored housing policies and strategies for each jurisdiction within the region. These solutions are detailed in the full technical report, which includes responsible actors, implementation steps, funding requirements, and best practices.

The release of this housing study represents a significant milestone in the WPPDC's efforts to address housing challenges and promote sustainable development in the region. The comprehensive findings and tailored strategies will provide valuable guidance for local governments, developers, and stakeholders as they work towards meeting the housing needs of the West Piedmont Planning District. For more information and to access the full housing study report, visit www.westpiedmontpdc.org.

Latest Unemployment Insurance Weekly Initial Claims at 2,081

More than 2,080 unemployment insurance weekly initial claims were filed during the week ending March 30, according to Virginia Works, which is 0.8 percent lower than last week's 2,098 claims and 33.1 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (1,563).

Nearly 83 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (60 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (236); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (232); Manufacturing (197); Health Care and Social Assistance (184); and Retail Trade (166).

Continued weeks claims (15,302) were 1.3 percent lower than last week (15,497) and were 29.4 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (11,823). Nearly 93 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five in-

dustries (56 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (2,258); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,069); Health Care and Social Assistance (1,311); Manufacturing (1,248); and Retail Trade (1,165).

In the week ending March 30, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 221,000, an increase of 9,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised up by 2,000 from 210,000 to 212,000. The advanced number of actual initial claims under state programs, unadjusted, totaled 196,376 in the week ending March 30, an increase of 2,455 (or 1.3 percent) from the previous week. The seasonal factors had expected a decrease of 5,304 (or 2.7 percent) from the previous week. There were 195,200 initial claims in the comparable week in 2023.

Youngkin vetoes bills to require retail warning of invasive plant species

By Shelby Warren

Capital News Service

The governor vetoed two bills that required garden retailers to educate consumers on invasive plant species and encourage alternatives.

Sen. Saddam Salim, D-Fairfax, introduced Senate Bill 306 and Del. Holly Seibold, D-Fairfax, introduced House Bill 47.

Any place that sells an invasive plant species would have been required to display a sign nearby that warned consumers and encouraged them to ask about alternatives. The bills included a penalty of no more than \$500 for retailers who failed to post the signs and a stop sale order made until the signage was posted.

Invasive plant species are not native to the region and can negatively impact ecosystems. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has identified 90 invasive plant species, by rank of most to least invasive. Species on the list include kudzu, English ivy, pear trees, golden bamboo and periwinkle.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin vetoed the

legislation on April 2, and stated that DCR "already publishes and distributes educational information related to invasive plant species and the benefits of planting native species."

The state should continue efforts to educate consumers about invasive plant species and promote alternatives, Youngkin stated. The bills put additional requirements and civil penalties on "small businesses for the sale of plants with low levels of invasiveness, such as periwinkle and winter honeysuckle."

The governor also listed a procedural conflict with the bills, which made the DCR invasive species list the legally binding authority and would have upended regulatory protocol that requires a public notice and comment period, the governor stated.

The legislation had bipartisan support, and also buy-in from "the nursery industry, big-box stores, and anti-invasive plant advocates," Salim stated on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Salim attributed the "incredibly disappointing" veto to the gover-

Housing study recommends strategies for Martinsville-Henry County

A recent housing study, conducted by the West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) collaboration with the Virginia Center for Housing Research at Virginia Tech (VCHR) and Housing Forward Virginia (HFV), concluded that:

According to the study, as of 2021, Henry County is home to 51,077 residents that make up 20,516 households. The homeownership rate in the county is 72.4 percent, which is slightly lower but consistent with the other counties in the WPPDC region.

The City of Martinsville has a smaller population with 13,476 residents (5,656 households). The homeownership rate in Martinsville is considerably less at 57.7 percent.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development the 2023 median income for the Henry County-Martinsville area is \$60,100. Despite an increase in the median income, 18.7 percent of the county households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing and approximately half of those spend more than 50 percent.

Martinsville has higher rates with 25.5 percent spending more than 30 percent and more than three quarters of those spending more than 50 percent. Households experiencing these housing cost burdens may have to choose between housing and other necessities such as food, clothing, and medical care.

The median sale price in Henry County has increased at a steady rate since 2015. In 2021, the median sale price had almost doubled compared to 2014. During the same period, the median number of days a house was on the market decreased from 146.5 to 65, indicating an increasing demand for housing.

Like the county, Martinsville's median sale price has steadily increased since 2015. In 2021, the median sale price had almost doubled the 2014 price. Simultaneously, the median number of days a house was on the market decreased from 158 to 69.5, showing an increasing demand for housing.

The age of housing in Henry County is distributed relatively consistently between units built prior to 1959 and 2000, with a drop after 2000.

The age of housing in the City of Martinsville is distributed differently than the county. Housing units built before 1959 account for 51 percent of housing. Approximately 30 percent was built between 1960 and 1979. Older units usually cost more to heat and cool and require more maintenance and upgrades to retain their full market value. There has been little development since 1980.

The majority of workers in both localities work in either Martinsville or Henry County. A small percentage commute to Franklin County, Pittsylvania County, City of Danville, and the City of Roanoke.

Strategies recommended for Henry County:

Align comprehensive plan update with findings from housing needs assessment. Comprehensive plans are a critical tool to guide the development of communities. The recent housing study identifies current and future housing needs and shows gaps in housing supply and affordability. Using the housing study's findings, the county can create housing goals and objectives. Once the goals and objectives are established, monitoring of the plan will help keep the plan on-track.

Implement a housing awareness campaign to seed more productive housing conversations across the county. Public campaigns are ex-

cellent for educating residents, allowing them to better understand the need for and benefits of housing development at all levels. Wage data can show the typical occupations that cannot afford market rate housing. Understanding that often respected occupations are unable to afford housing in their communities can deepen conversations about housing. This effort may include:

- Assess staff capacity to undertake this work in-house, or consider seeking support from outside consultants.
- Connect with potential funders.
- Assemble a housing coalition to act as campaign ambassadors.
- Launch campaign.

Strategies for the City of Martinsville:

Outline specific objectives and leverage best practices to ensure a new comprehensive plan effectively promotes new housing opportunities. The city's outdated comprehensive plan has created barriers for development. Outdated and contradictory regulations along with lack of uniformity in zoning ordinances, lead to delays and increased costs for developers. A review of the latest comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances can identify outdated elements and inconsistencies. Working with residents, developers and other stakeholders will allow the city to assess how the current practices affect them.

Develop a strategic process for re-developing scattered site properties through public-private partnerships. Martinsville currently has 40 buildable lots scattered throughout. These properties are an opportunity to add new homes to unused lots. The city should publish a Request for Proposal for private developers requesting innovative housing projects, offer incentives to reduce the cost of construction and make the project more appealing, and establish a review committee to ensure that projects align with the city's housing and community objectives.

Develop educational materials and strategies for increasing understanding of housing affordability. Most of the community in Martinsville is unaware of the city's housing needs and the potential solutions to those needs. This creates barriers and slows the efforts to address the issues. Reaching out to the public by using educational materials that clearly and concisely explain the housing situation, meetings with community advocates, and creating broad and easy access to the information will create a better understanding in the community. This can help promote progress and increase the pace of development.

Develop strategic plan for effectively deploying city entities to leverage unique powers, simplify processes, and reduce duplicative efforts. The recreation of the city's Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and creation of a land bank offers opportunities that could support housing development in Martinsville by using powers granted to these types of entities by state law. A dedicated city staff along with other stakeholders can examine and coordinate activities. This effort may include:

- Developing a plan that outlines a collaborative approach for property acquisitions, financial incentives, and other activities.
- Identifying and prioritizing potential sites for residential development.
- Establish regular communication to prevent duplicative efforts.
- Explore capacity building grants from state and local funders.

nor choosing "politics over common sense policies." The senator plans to bring the bill back next year.

Invasive species have cost Virginia as much as \$1 billion annually, according to the Virginia Invasive Species website. This total exceeds \$120 billion nationally.

Current state code prohibits state agencies from planting, selling or propagating any listed invasive plant, unless necessary for "scientific or educational purposes or bona fide agricultural purposes."

Lawmakers recently approved a budget that distributes several million dollars across departments

to help meet initiatives outlined by the Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan, and which includes the hiring of new employees.

Youngkin has vetoed 91 bills, some duplicates, as of April 3. He has until April 8 to take action on remaining bills and the budget. Then lawmakers will reconvene on April 17 to consider any of his proposed changes.

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.

Creativity is blooming at Piedmont Arts

Spring brings classes, educational opportunities



Carlisle School's Zip Zap Zop Theatre Co. will perform for toddlers in the gallery again on April 23.



Certified Bob Ross technique instructor Naomi Hodge-Muse guides participants through the creation of a landscape.

Piedmont Arts is abuzz with their Spring class line-up. Classes at Piedmont Arts cover a wide range of styles and techniques for all ages and skill levels. Taught by local artists and artisans, these classes are a great way to express yourself and learn something new.

Bob Ross Painting Class meets monthly on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Taught by certified instructor Naomi Hodge-Muse, these sessions lead you through the entire Bob Ross method to create happy little landscapes. Students should bring a roll of paper towels. All other supplies provided. Advanced registration required. Upcoming dates and projects are:

*May 2: Evening Waterfall

*June 6: Hidden Stream

Admission costs are \$75 for members and \$85 for non-members. Register on PiedmontArts.org or by calling the museum.

Preschool in the Galleries will take place on Tuesday, April 23. The first session will begin at 9:30 a.m. and the second will begin at 10:30 a.m. Preschool in the Galleries is a series of programs for pre-K students designed to foster a love of the performing and visual arts at a young age. Performances are free of

charge to students and schools and feature performers from various arts organizations and schools in Martinsville-Henry County. April's event will feature Carlisle School's Zip Zap Zop Theatre Co. Contact Christiana Jarrett at cjarrett@piedmontarts.org to reserve a spot for your child or class.

Chix With Sticks, a knitting group, meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Sessions are self-guided and provide a space to socialize while creating. Bring your own supplies. Advanced registration required. Admission is free for members and \$5 for non-members at the door. Upcoming sessions will take place on April 9 and 23 and May 14 and 28. All sessions begin at 10:30 a.m.

Needle Felting with instructor Bella Thorne will return on Friday, May 10 at 2 p.m. Participants will take home a completed project. Advanced registration required. May's project will be a felted bunny. More needle felting classes will take place during the summer. Classes are \$30 for members and \$35 for non-members.

All class information, including registration, can be found on PiedmontArts.org.



Gov. Glenn Youngkin participates in a bill signing ceremony at the Barbara Johns Building, April 4.

Additional tools added in fight against fentanyl

A bill signed last week is expected to help combat the fentanyl crisis.

Senate Bill 469 strengthens the fight against the alarming and devastating crisis that has inflicted profound harm in the Commonwealth.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin signed the bill that makes it a Class 6 felony for any person - except for permitted manufacturers - to possess, purchase, sell, give, distribute, or possess with intent to sell, give, or distribute an encapsulating machine or a tabletting machine that manufactures, compounds, converts, produces, processes, prepares, or otherwise introduces into the human body a controlled substance; a Class 5 felony if such person knows, intends, or has reasonable cause to believe that such action will result in the unlawful manufacture of a controlled substance or counterfeit controlled substance that contains a controlled substance classified in Schedule I or Schedule II of the Drug Control Act or a controlled substance analog as defined in relevant law.

The bill also makes it a felony punishable by imprisonment for not less than 10 nor more than 40 years for any person 18 years of age or older to knowingly allow a minor or a mentally incapacitated or physically helpless person of any age to be present during the manufacture or attempted manufacture of any substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl.

The bill also increases from a Class 2 misdemeanor to a Class 6 felony the penalty for violations related to adulterated or misbranded drugs and cosmetics.

"By signing this legislation, we are

more resolved, more emboldened, more unified and more focused than ever before to ensure no more Virginians die as a result of this fentanyl epidemic," said Youngkin. "We are sending a powerful message that Virginia will take critical action against the production and distribution of this horrible poison and we will not tolerate the devastation wrought by this deadly substance."

"We lose an average of five Virginians every day to fentanyl overdoses. The rise of counterfeit drugs and synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, continue to fuel the drug epidemic gripping the nation right now, but Virginia is fighting back. By enhancing penalties and criminalizing the possession and use of machines to produce counterfeit drugs, we are supplying law enforcement personnel with the tools they need to hold drug dealers accountable for poisoning our communities," said Attorney General Jason Miyares.

"Tragically, virtually every person in the Commonwealth has a family or other close connection to someone who has died of a drug overdose, fentanyl in particular. The Virginia Department of Health reports that almost 79% of drug overdose deaths in our Commonwealth are due to fentanyl. This is unacceptable," said Sen. Mark Obenshain. "This new law provides three avenues to get at those who are manufacturing and altering these drugs for sale. It's going to help protect our children and save their lives. I am grateful to my colleagues in the General Assembly, both Democrat and Republican who voted in favor of this bill and I thank the Governor for signing it into law today."

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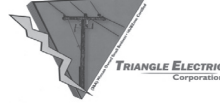
- Food available in Alumni Hall Starting at 10:30am
- BBQ and Slaw Tubs To-Go • BBQ Plates (includes slaw, baked beans, and roll) • BBQ Sandwiches • Kid's Meal (Hot-dog, chips, and drink) • Homemade Desserts
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Piedmont Arts danced to a successful fundraiser



Anna Wheeler and Jacob Frith came out swinging for the Judges Award. Photo by Rick Dawson.



2024's Grand Champions were Tekela Redd and Pres Garrett. Photo by Rick Dawson.



The full company of dancers and coaches onstage after the performance. Photo by Rick Dawson.



Jennie Rabon and Bobby LaPrade finish their dance with a flourish. Photo by Rick Dawson.



Impact Award Winners Jewell Drewery and Ouss Sahar were all smiles. Photo by Rick Dawson.

Solar eclipse partially visible through clouds



Locally, the total solar eclipse on Monday, April 8 was visible during breaks in the clouds. A solar eclipse occurs when the sun, the moon, and Earth line up, either fully or partially. The moon passes between the sun and Earth, casting a shadow on the plane that either fully or partially blocks the sun's light in certain areas, according to NASA. (By Ray Reynolds)

Early last month, audiences flocked to the Martinsville High School auditorium for a great cause and a fabulous show. Dancing for the Arts, Piedmont Arts' biennial fundraiser, took place on Saturday, March 9. This event features 8 teams of local celebrities who worked with local dance coaches to perform and raise money for the arts. The first half of the event consisted of randomly assigned dance styles. The second half was a freestyle, containing a variety of surprise genres. Hosted by Natalie Hodge-Davis of Rudy's Girl Media, the event buzzed with excitement and energy.

Three awards were presented at the end of Dancing for the Arts. The first, the Impact Award, was awarded to the team that reached the most people and made the most connections to Piedmont Arts. This year, that award went to Jewell Drewery and Ouss Sahar. Drewery is a realtor with Rives S. Brown and Sahar is the SSC Unit Director with Henry County Public Schools. Their dances were the rumba and the jitterbug.

Another award at this event was the Judges Award. This award went to the team with the overall highest scores from the judges. This award was presented to Anna Wheeler and Jacob Frith. Wheeler is the Programs Coordinator for the Dan River Basin Association and Frith works

with The Lester Group. The styles they danced were swing and jazz.

The final award given out at Dancing for the Arts was the Grand Champion award. This award is given for a combination of the most money raised and highest scores from the judges. This award was presented to Tekela Redd and Pres Garrett. Redd is the Service Center Director for the Salvation Army and Garrett is the owner of Starling Avenue Cards and Games. Their styles were the quickstep and hip-hop.

The judges for Dancing for the Arts were Sarah Hodges, Pedro Szalay, and Devin Pendleton. Their commentary and expertise highlighted each dance performed.

Through voting, memberships, and sponsorships, these teams raised over \$70,000 for Piedmont Arts. "These are vital funds so Piedmont Arts can provide impactful visual arts, performing

arts and arts education," Piedmont Arts Executive Director Heidi Pinkston said. "These funds make sure that the galleries are always free and open to the public so we can bring world class performances to our community and take arts into the schools for absolutely no cost to teachers, schools or students."

"This fundraiser is so much more than raising funds, it is also raising awareness about Piedmont Arts and Martinsville and Henry County," Pinkston added.

The other teams consisted of Anna Hatchett and Louis Campbell, Bonnie Favero and Damian Wainwright, Claudia Graham and Spencer Koger, Jennie Rabon and Bobby LaPrade, and Jamie Turner and Justin Kline. A special performance from Joyce Staples and Josh Bires-Grodensky capped off the evening. Each dancer is a leader and beloved figure in the community and their talents, time, and efforts shone in their performances.



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Dr. Stephen Ernst joined the Spectrum Medical team in July 2023. After growing up in Charlottesville, he attended the University of Virginia.

Dr. Ernst specializes in surgical and non-operative management of all levels of shoulder and elbow issues. His most frequently performed surgeries include shoulder replacement, rotator cuff repairs, shoulder stabilization, minimally invasive elbow surgery, tendon repairs, nerve decompression and fracture care in the upper extremity. He looks forward to using his advanced orthopaedic training to widen the scope of orthopaedic services offered in southern Virginia.

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