



Holly Kozelsky presented photos, recordings and letters as evidence of issues with the garage.

# Commission moves forward on controversial rezoning request

By Jessica Dillon

The Henry County Planning Commission voted to recommend rezoning a property in the Reed Creek District for commercial use, despite strong opposition from nearby and other residents. The final decision now rests with the Board of Supervisors.

The property, located at 3975 Chatham Road, is owned by Ken-

neth Lewis, who has allowed the building to be used as a garage without a license. Lewis requested a zoning change from Agricultural District A-1 to Commercial to continue using the site as an automobile repair garage.

“When did you find out that you weren’t supposed to be there,” Paul Setliff, commission member, asked

(See Commission p. 2)



Police Chief Robert Fincher presents the 2024 crime statistics.

# Martinsville property owners concerned over rising assessments

By Jessica Dillon

A recent citywide property reassessment has left many Martinsville homeowners concerned over rising tax bills, as some properties saw value increases in the tens of thousands of dollars. The issue was discussed during the Martinsville City Council meeting on March 13, where City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides explained the reassessment process and how it affects tax rates.

While some residents celebrated increased home equity, others worried about affording the higher taxes that could follow.

Ferrell-Benavides emphasized that the city has no control over the reassessment process but does determine the property tax rate per \$100 of assessed value. Currently, residents pay \$0.77 per \$100. The council sets the final rate to fund city operations.

“The rate has remained consistent for last year and the year before,” Ferrell-Benavides said.

Council member Julian Mei also addressed the issue, noting that his home’s value had skyrocketed as well.

Residents concerned about their

(See Property Owners p. 2)

# City council vote sparks conflict among members

By Staff Reports

A March 17 Martinsville City Council vote and a dispute about a draft meeting record have sparked controversy, with council members clashing over transparency, procedure, and the handling of the city manager’s salary negotiations.

Rawls

In a March 18 email sent to all members of council, City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides and City Attorney Stephen V. Durbin, council member Aaron Rawls wrote, “I received an update that Council conducted an unannounced open session last night regarding the city manager’s employment contract. It looks to me like a bizarre motion was made but no vote recorded. While I know some of you are eager to avoid public attention and accountability for this, we need to pause and handle the matter responsibly.”

Rawls added that “not even a

year ago, we settled a case resulting from Council malfeasance in which a deliberately hasty and reckless contract with false employment information became the subject of a ~million dollar claim against our city. Ultimately, it cost our people \$200,000 (\$40 per household) to settle that. We all know who did what in this case, which is why I’m concerned that Council is right back on the ... road of irresponsible behavior, hiding actions from and lying to our people, and doing sneaky things with their money.”

Additionally, Rawls asked that “we schedule meetings and provide schedule change awareness at least 7 business days in advance. This includes extra sessions in advance of our 7pm public sessions. I learned about the 3/11 date change on 3/7. I learned about yesterday’s and today’s session last Thursday at 9:30pm.”

(See City Council p. 3)

# Two designs for Baldwin Park upgrades under consideration

By Jessica Dillon

Plans to renovate Baldwin Park, including new fitness upgrades, were presented during a recent Martinsville City Council work session.

Council members reviewed two proposed layouts, each offering a different vision for the design of Baldwin Park. The project is part of the Foothills of the Blue Ridge Outdoor Recreation Plan, a 15-year regional initiative that includes Martinsville, Henry and Patrick counties.

Baldwin Park plays a significant role in the plan, with much of the funding for the project



Greg Maggard gives information on the installation of the fitness pad at Baldwin Park.

from grants awarded by the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission. The de-

sign is being developed by Destination by Design, a firm based in Boone, North Carolina.

The first plan in-

(See Baldwin p. 5)

# Outside agencies ask city submit budget requests

By Jessica Dillon

Several local non-profit agencies submitted budget requests to the Martinsville City Council on March 18. Requests came from organizations including the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA, Piedmont Arts, Warming Shelter, and Salvation Army. Each group provided an overview of its mission before presenting its funding request.

The Chamber’s Partnership for Economic Growth (C-PEG) requested \$40,000, an increase of \$12,500 from previous years. The Warming Center requested \$35,000, the same amount as last year, and mentioned

the possibility of adding a cooling shelter during the summer.

The Fayette Area Historical Initiative (FAHI) requested \$7,500 to accommodate its growing number of visitors and to invest in a recommended new security system. The SPCA, which serves more than 1,400 animals annually, requested \$20,000, an increase of \$5,000 from last year.

The Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp. (EDC) requested \$100,000, the same as last year, to continue supporting economic growth in the area. Patrick & Henry Community College also

requested level funding of \$19,835 to help rebuild its local fund balance.

(See City Budget p. 2)

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# Commission

(cont. from page 1)

about the current garage operation.

Lewis said that he didn’t realize the zoning wasn’t correct. “It’s been without a valid license there for more than two years.” The garage has only been in operation for six months.

“It was built as a body shop and used as such from the early 1970s into the late 80s or early 90s,” said Lee Clark, the county’s director of Planning and Zoning. The property was also used as a sheet metal shop and as a car lot, before becoming personal vehicle storage with an attached insurance office.

While some cited its long auto-related history, opponents contended noise, late-night activity, and safety concerns while presenting their reasons to deny the request.

“The people that are in there now don’t show up until dark—five or six—and are there all night,” one person said, explaining that the noise disrupts his sleep.

Another resident stated that he owns the second driveway into the garage and intends to close it, which could limit access to the property.

“The current owner of the property and the gentlemen entering the property are nowhere near being good neighbors,” another neighbor added, raising concerns about the upkeep of the garage.

Holly Kozelsky, who lives nearby, presented photos of skid marks and vehicles she alleged had switched license plates, documenting multiple plate changes on a Kia and a truck. She also recorded noise from the property and played it for the board.

Clark clarified that even if a license plate is switched on private property, authorities are not in a position to enforce the swap until the vehicle is on the road.

“It has been peaceful until now,” Kozelsky said, emphasizing that past businesses on the property complied with zoning regulations.

Kozelsky also said that she offered to buy the property for \$50,000 in cash, but Lewis countered at three times the amount.

Additional letters from neighbors and Kozelsky’s daughter were submitted, detailing complaints about reckless driving, loud noises, and safety concerns. Kozelsky’s daughter described the property as an “eye-sore” and expressed fear about driving near the location due to rac-

ing cars.

“Everyone wants to support business, but that has to be a responsible business,” said another community member who was concerned about the lack of a license and compliance issues. “I don’t think as an individual his quest should be approved.”

Not everyone opposed the request.

“I feel very comfortable that he has no intention of running an illegal business in this community. It’s been a garage for decades,” said Mary Martin, who noted that noise has always been present in the area.

“I say if you don’t live there, you’re going on hearsay,” Martin added.

Clark explained that while the building pre-dates zoning regulations, the commercial status was lost due to inactivity for more than two years.

“The county does have a noise ordinance, but it doesn’t cover a situation like this,” Clark said. He also noted that law enforcement had intervened at the site, reducing the number of vehicles from more than 30 to five.

“You can’t legislate common courtesy,” Clark added, stating that the commission’s role is strictly to evaluate land use, not the personalities of those operating businesses.

“The Henry County Planning Commission only makes decisions on proper land use,” Setliff added. He agreed that he wouldn’t want it next to his property, but the commission’s decision was purely about zoning.

The commission recommended approval of the rezoning request.

The Board of Supervisors will now review the measure, with the ability to consider broader community concerns before making a final decision.

Other rezoning requests reviewed:

\*The commission also reviewed a request from Brett Tucker, who sought to rezone 8.4 acres at 94 Trent Hill Drive in the Blackberry District for agricultural use.

Tucker explained that the property would not be used for commercial farming but rather as a small-scale family operation to benefit his autistic son.

“This is not commercial, just small animals, mostly to help my son,” Tucker said, adding that no large livestock would be present.



Chris Lawless details his request for rezoning.

The commission approved the request.

\*Chris Lawless requested a rezoning of 1687 Stultz Road in the Collinsville District from Government and Special Use District (G-S) to Limited Industrial District (I-2) for welding and fabrication.

Clark noted that the property was originally a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) office before being used as a Public Service Authority (PSA) shop. Lawless will have his own private entrance off VC Drive to minimize disruption to nearby properties.

“This protects the community further,” Clark said.

The commission approved the rezoning request.

The Board of Supervisors will now consider all of the commission’s recommendations, and make a final decision to approve or deny.

# Property Owners

(cont. from page 1)

reassessments were encouraged to contact the Commissioner of Revenue before the March 31 deadline to challenge their property values.

“There is a process where if you see your set rate and do not agree with it, you can go to her office and work with her, and she will help you understand how you can challenge those values,” Ferrell-Benavides explained.

Mei suggested that owners of vacant lots compare their assessments to similar parcels to potentially lower their bills.

The council is also considering adjusting the real estate tax rate to help manage financial strain in the city.

Residents voiced concerns over the financial burden the reassessment may place on long-time homeowners, retirees, and families.

“The older people that live here have no way of coming up with that excess money, and they are panicking. I talk to them every day. They are panicking,” one resident said.

A mother expressed frustration over affordability concerns.

“My kids ask me why I want to live here,” she said. “It’s the affordability.” She urged the council to keep the tax rate low to preserve Martinsville’s appeal as an affordable place to live.

Another resident suggested a homestead exemption, a program that reduces property taxes for eligible homeowners in some states.

“Maybe an idea might be a homestead exemption,” she said, citing her elderly mother’s use of the program in Florida.

Del. Eric Phillips, R-Martinsville, addressed the issue, stating he would advocate at the state level for financial relief.

“One of the things the mayor has been speaking to me about prior to this is Virginia possibly having a homestead exemption for communities,” Phillips said.

Since Virginia follows the Dillon Rule, cities like Martinsville cannot enact a homestead



Del. Eric Phillips pledges to seek tax relief in Richmond.

exemption without approval from state lawmakers in Richmond.

Melody Cartwright, who plans to oppose Phillips in November, also criticized the tax spike, attributing rising property values in part to out-of-state buyers willing to pay more for homes.

“I have met many new residents, and all have been super nice,” Cartwright said. “On the other hand, because these out-of-towners most likely feel that the cost of our houses is such a ‘deal’ and are willing to pay more, now this is another reason why our own real estate worth has skyrocketed. What about the long-term Martinsville natives?”

City council members will set the final tax rate at a later date. Until then, residents are encouraged to seek reassessment reviews if they believe their property values were set too high.



Melody Cartwright speaks out against the recent property reassessments.

Also during the meeting, Police Chief Robert Fincher presented the 2024 annual crime statistics, reporting that the Martinsville Police Department is now fully staffed with the addition of 10 new officers this year.

“We are full, and we are thrilled at all of these individuals that we hired on,” Fincher said.

Crime in the city has continued to decline, with an 11.41 percent decrease in overall crime compared to 2023. However, drug offenses saw a slight uptick, rising from 124 in 2023 to 141 in 2024.

“I can tell you that in 2020, the numbers were even higher, so we have had a good trend,” Fincher noted.

In other matters, the council:

\*Recognized Women’s History Month during the meeting.

# City Budget

(cont. from page 1)

The Southern Area Agency on Aging requested funding to support its Alzheimer’s respite program, asking for \$1,481, an increase of \$111 from last year. The Salvation Army requested \$50,000 to help fund its community garden initiative.

The Southside Survivor Response Center requested \$20,000, an increase from last year’s funding, to support victims of domestic abuse. The Virginia Legal Aid Society requested \$7,500, while the Virginia Museum of Natural History asked for \$10,815 to support two full-time educators. The Western Virginia EMS Council requested \$4,435, the same as last year.

Piedmont Arts Association requested \$15,000 in level funding. Anchor also sought level funding of \$50,504. Blue Ridge Regional Library requested a 5 percent increase from last year’s \$317,704 to help offset rising costs. Focus on Youth CASA (FOCUS) requested \$5,220 in level



Charisse Hairston requested funding on behalf of FAHI to upgrade its security system.

funding to continue supporting children



Teresa Fontaine presented the Southern Area Agency on Aging’s request.

in the area.



# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## Meetings

### Tuesday, March 25

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Municipal Building Council Chambers, 55 W. Church Street, Martinsville.

Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting, 3 p.m., Henry County Admin Building Summerlin Room, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.

### Wednesday, March 26

Board of Equalization Hearing, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., New College Institute, 191 Fayette St., Room B207, Martinsville.

Board of Supervisors Comprehensive Plan Joint Session, 9:30 a.m., Henry County Administration Building, Summerlin Room, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.

## Events

### Friday, March 21-Saturday March 22

Magna Vista Theatre presents Clue On Stage, 7 p.m., Magna Vista High School, 701 Magna Vista School Road, Ridgeway. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door, at [our.show/getaclueMVHS](http://our.show/getaclueMVHS).

### Saturday March 22

Waders & Waddlers Education Station at the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville. One day only, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Highlights include Be a Science Sleuth - activity for kids; Meet a Philpott Lake Park Ranger; learn “Why we don’t feed crackers” and more. First public view of waterfowl specimens from the museum vault. Presented by the SW Piedmont Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists, the Virginia Museum of Natural History and the Army Corps of Engineers.’ For more info: <https://www.vmnh.net/plan-your-visit>.

Pasta Night For The Fight, hosted by YMCA Early Learning Center, at YMCA 5 Points Program Center, 710 N Memorial Blvd., Martinsville. Proceeds to benefit a local family, 5-7:30 p.m. Cost \$15 for adults; \$10 for kids 10+, \$5 for kids 10 and under

### Sunday, March 23

Magna Vista Theatre presents Clue On Stage, 3 p.m., Magna Vista High School, 701 Magna Vista School Road, Ridgeway. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door, at [our.show/getaclueMVHS](http://our.show/getaclueMVHS).

## City Council

(cont. from page 1)

The vote Rawls called into question gave Mayor LC Jones the authority to negotiate a salary adjustment for Ferrell-Benavides based on an October performance assessment.

### Lawson

Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson said that both the meeting and the vote were recorded but acknowledged an error in the draft minutes.

The draft minutes that were distributed were not correct, Lawson said. “And the minutes haven’t been finished.”

She explained that the deputy clerk of council rushed through the document and accidentally distributed incorrect information.

“It was an error that will be corrected. We came out of closed session and did this in open session,” Lawson said. “We didn’t vote to give anybody any authorization to change the contract. We gave him the authorization to negotiate her pay based on her evaluation from October.”

### Jones

Jones explained that before the November election concluded, the council held a closed session meeting at the New College Institute to discuss the assessment. There were “heated conversations” and the process did not conclude. The city worked with the Berkley Group LLC, to craft and set guidelines for the city manager in the upcoming year. But “none of us came back together” after the election and the work was not completed, Jones said.

The Berkley Group conducted the council’s retreat a few weeks ago, and “one of the issues” that came up was the fact that the council hadn’t provided the city manager with “guidelines, what the council wants” to see for this year, Jones said.

On March 13, the council was to hold a closed session meeting and a work session, with plans to discuss the city manager and city attorney positions before convening in regular session. But, because the work session was longer than anticipated, the closed session portion was rescheduled.

“The fifth council member showed up at the end” of that meeting, Jones said of Rawls. However, “that same day, we publicly set that” March 17 meeting, he said.

At that subsequent meeting, and with an understanding about a pay range among council members, Jones said council member Julian Mei made the motion to give Jones the authority to negotiate the contract and/or pay adjustment. Lawson seconded the motion, a vote was taken and recorded.

Mei then requested a draft of the minutes “just to give him a guideline” for talking points. Generally, we don’t have minutes available until the next council meeting. They are never available the next day,” Jones said, and explained a draft of the minutes was hastily prepared by the deputy clerk of council at Mei’s request, and then shared with Rawls.

According to a copy of the draft minutes attached to Rawls’ email, the motion was made by Lawson, and seconded by council member Rayshaun Gravely.

Beauty and The Beast. 3 p.m., Martinsville High School Auditorium, 351 Commonwealth Blvd E, Martinsville.

### Tuesday, April 1

Registration for Summer Camps at Spencer Penn opens. Classes include sports, CSI, SPCA and others. Call 276-957-5757 for more details.

### Friday, April 4 - Saturday, April 5

First BIG Basement Sale of 2025 at Fido’s Finds, Friday, 10 a.m. -5 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. -2 p.m. Fido’s basement, located at 119 East Main Street, is loaded with treasures - furniture, home decor, books, collectibles and more. Every purchase supports the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA.

### Friday, April 11

Music Night at Spencer Penn with Travis Frye and Blue Mountain. Gate opens at 5 p.m. and the band starts at 6:30 p.m. Admission is a \$5 cash donation. Concessions, including the ever popular Spencer Penn hot dogs, chicken salad, BBQ, and homemade desserts, will be sold.

### Saturday, April 12

Fish fry by American Legion Homer Dillard Post #78, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 139 Creekside Drive, Martinsville. Fish sandwiches are \$9, homemade desserts are \$2, sodas or water are \$1. Drive-through event with limited dining-in. Call (276) 224-5679 or (276) 340-5169 to place orders.

Hazardous Waste Day, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Bassett Service Center, 2285 Fairystone Park Highway, Bassett.

### Monday, April 14

The Friends of the Blue Ridge Regional Library are meeting in the Main Branch, 310 E. Church St., Martinsville, 10:30 a.m. All are welcome.

## ONGOING

### Through April 7

Strickland Brothers 10 Minute Oil Change (formerly Kwik Lube) locations at 700 Liberty St., Martinsville, and 6518 Greensboro Road, Ridgeway, are accepting monetary donations to support local school teachers in need of supplies, technology, snacks, etc. The goal is to raise \$50,000 that will be evenly distributed between school divisions in Henry County and Martinsville.

Uptown Pub Run, Mondays at 6 p.m., meets at Renewal Brewing 32 Franklin St, Martinsville.

The draft did not include a recorded vote.

Jones said council members who are absent from closed session meetings must wait until they “come back to a closed session” meeting to find out what occurred. “So, information was given and information got out.”

“The information leaked out of closed session came from Mei,” Jones said, and added the council meeting on Tuesday included a closed session “to discuss the leak from the previous closed session.”

To illustrate transparency among members, Jones said he consulted with the city attorney to get advice about handling that issue. As always, all members of the council are briefed about the content of the conversations with the attorney, because the attorney represents the entire council, not just one member.

Rawls “is so concerned about money and nefarious things happening,” Jones said, and emphasized every council meeting is publicly posted.

“When you take this job, you understand it’s going to require sacrifices. I’m missing time from work, time with my family ... but that’s not an excuse to say you’re not” able to come to a meeting “and need to be caught up. The city manager meets with each council member every week” and by the end of the week, has compiled a list of concerns that is used to plan the next agenda.

“When you have one person that decided they just want to be a distraction,” Jones said it poses a challenge. “When there are four of us, we gel. We get along,” Jones said, and added he believes the recent incident happened because “one council member” may be torn between wanting “to be loyal to a friend” and their commitment to council.

Jones said that he had little trust in Mei after the election due to issues during the campaign. “Now, I have absolutely none. All he had to do was come back and say, ‘I’m sorry.’”

“You’ve just got to be straight with us. People make mistakes. You’ve just got to be straight, whether it was a mistake or whether it was on purpose,” Jones said. “We’ve just got to stand on what’s right. At least for me, I can deal with you better that way.”

He added that Mei sent two emails to the council and other city officials on Wednesday, but does not believe any members responded.

### Mei

The first was titled ‘Recap of Yesterday.’ In it, Mei wrote in part, “I feel I should recap and relay to you some events from yesterday, for transparency, so that everyone knows exactly what transpired on my end.

“Early morning, on Tuesday the 18th of March, Bill Wyatt (reporter) reached out to me and wanted to know if any action was taken as a result of our closed session and also wanted to know about how Superintendent Zeb Talley’s proposed gym would be funded. As a courtesy, I have always been transparent with Bill and other media, but they understand and respect that I cannot talk about our closed session discussions. As I knew Peyton (Niblett, deputy

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

The Bassett Ruritan Club, 277 Philpott Dam Road, Bassett, hosts breakfast on the 2nd Saturday of each month, \$9 for adults, and \$4 for children under 12. All you can eat, sausage, fried Bologna, eggs, cooked apples, sausage gravy, 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.

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.

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

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

TOPS FIELDALE VA 0626 meets on Tuesdays at 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Bassett Public Library, 3969 Fairystone Hwy, Bassett. New members are welcome. For more information, please call Patti Farmer (276) 358-0489.

The Henry County Adult Learning Center offers free in-house and online classes to help prepare for college, career, or earn your high school equivalency or GED. Call (276) 647-9585.

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. Registration is not required.

clerk of council) had documented the action taken in the public portion of our session, I asked Peyton to send me that verbiage so I could simply relay that and that alone. While waiting on that, I also got clarification from Travis Clemons regarding the funding aspect of the gym and was told that there was no current funding for a new gym and that Mr. Talley had been hoping to get private funding/donations, etc. to contribute toward it, but nothing official is currently in place. Once I had both of those data points, I called Bill and directed his attention to the minutes and action taken in our public session after we came out of closed session, and also the fact that no funding is in place for a new gym,” Mei wrote.

“Around the same time this was occurring, Councilman Rawls reached out to me and also wanted to know what took place during our closed session. I told him that I wasn’t sure if I was allowed to discuss what happened in closed session with anyone not present, even a member of Council, so I reached out to Mr. Durbin for a consult. In my conversation with Mr. Durbin, he recommended that any Councilperson not present for a closed session, who wished to be briefed, send an email requesting information in accordance with our policy, or words to that effect.

“Given I felt there was no reason Councilman Rawls could not be briefed on what occurred during the closed session, and given the minutes from the public portion were already available, I told him we reviewed the City Manager’s performance review from October 2024, and the Mayor was given the authority to negotiate a salary adjustment based on her performance review,” Mei wrote.

“I feel it necessary to emphasize that I did not, and never would, relay to a member of the media anything discussed in our closed sessions. I do know the importance of the confidentiality involved in our closed session meetings and take that very seriously. Since all of this occurred, it has been brought to my attention that some feel I may have lost their trust in engaging in this behavior. I will say, for myself, that I act in accordance with my conscience and also in accordance with the law, and when I am unsure of the latter, I request advice. This is why I contacted Mr. Durbin for clarification and why I went to the lengths I did before responding to Bill to make sure I was properly directing him to the documented action taken in our public session when we came out of closed session.

“As for my conscience, when people make inquiries to me for clarification, my gut instinct is to be transparent and forthcoming, but I am mindful of what I can and cannot say, particularly within the context of what is discussed in a closed session,” Mei wrote. “It is my hope that the record above demonstrates I am mindful of this and take the appropriate steps to ensure transparency, and also to make sure messaging is consistent.”

Mei declined to comment.

Gravely, Ferrell-Benavides, and Durbin could not immediately be reached for comment.



OPINION

The Brownfields Program

As the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee’s Subcommittee on Environment, part of my responsibility is to oversee the Brownfields Program.

This is mostly a bi-partisan effort, but it is specifically helpful to the Ninth District.

A brownfield site is a piece of property where the expansion, redevelopment, or re-use of the site may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant.

Some examples of these properties could be inactive factory buildings, abandoned railroads or even defunct coal mines.

It is estimated that there are more than 450,000 brownfields in the United States.

The cleanup of brownfields presents tremendous potential for economic development. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) says there are thousands of brownfields opportunities in the Commonwealth.


These sites are eligible for assessment, cleanup or multi-purpose grants administered under the Brownfields Program.

My Subcommittee held a hearing recently to examine improvements to the Brownfields Program and assess the potential impacts of brownfield site redevelopment.

The hearing featured multiple witnesses. I had the privilege to welcome LENOWISCO Planning District Commission Executive Director Duane Miller. He testified on the benefits of the Brownfields Program and its impacts on rural, coal communities.

Miller has been active in LENOWISCO’s efforts to use federal dollars to clean up and repurpose brownfields in deep Southwest Virginia.

One brownfield site Miller cited was Project Intersection in Norton. In that case, Miller was able to



Morgan Griffith

Representative

turn some Brownfields Program funding into a much larger total investment from state agencies, other federal funds, and private sources.

Thanks to the Brownfields Program funding, the Norton industrial park could draw further funding from programs like the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program (also instrumental in developing this site was the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) fund which I helped bring to Virginia).

As a result, the initial Brownfields Program funding jump-started nearly \$35 million in investment to develop the Norton industrial park site!

EarthLink, an internet service provider, and Wrap Technologies, a technology group that creates tools for law enforcement, are two companies to announce centers at the Norton industrial park site. These companies will create hundreds of jobs in the region.

My hope is that the Brownfields Program can continue to create more success stories like these.

I consistently advocate for rural communities in our region of Virginia to receive appropriate federal help.

As illustrated in the case of the Norton industrial park site, assessing and redeveloping brownfields can generate greater access to federal funds through programs like AMLER and AML.

Further, in Martinsville, funds from the Brownfields Program were used to remediate the city’s vacant Maple Street substation for storage of large battery banks.

The substation’s batteries now store energy and electricity for the city.

Miller and others in the hearing highlighted the endless possibilities that come from brownfield cleanup and redevelopment.

These redeveloped properties can attract emerging industries.

Data centers are in hot demand as artificial intelligence gains popularity. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin is committed to making America the “AI capital of the world.”

I look forward to working with Administrator Zeldin to improve the Brownfields Program.

One way to accomplish this feat is building more data centers and artificial intelligence infrastructure. Brownfield sites are potential locations to harbor more of these essential facilities.

A second witness at the hearing, who has experience developing data centers, verified this and explained the Brownfields Program has a role to play in facilitating the creation of more data centers.

Moreover, semiconductor manufacturing is also picking up steam. Thanks to the Trump Administration, a Taiwan semiconductor company recently announced plans to make a \$100 billion investment in the U.S.

Such investments require additional chip manufacturing facilities and, once again, brownfield sites could play host.

Congress will need to reauthorize the Brownfields Program. The Program is set to expire by 2026.

While efforts are underway to make the government more efficient and accountable to the American people, I am committed to ensuring programs like the Brownfields Program are strengthened to adequately serve communities in Southwest Virginia.

When doing so, I will continue to advocate for the work of folks like Mr. Miller, who dedicate these programs to improve the welfare and local economies of the region.

Call the Abingdon office at (276) 525-1405, the Christiansburg office at (540) 381-5671, or email by visiting [www.morgangriffith.house.gov](http://www.morgangriffith.house.gov) with questions or comments.

Honoring Patrick Wright:

A Life of Kindness, Laughter, and Community

Patrick was not at the last City Council meeting.

Patrick hasn’t been at the library lately, nor the YMCA.

Patrick’s not here anymore, and that feels weird.

Patrick Wright, for many years, was a familiar sight around Martinsville. If you’ve ever been at public events in Martinsville, you’d remember the cheerful grey-haired and balding gentle giant who was always smiling and giving pleasant greetings.

He died on March 10. The picture used in his obituary was absolutely fitting: Patrick, looking directly into the camera, smiling from ear to ear, holding his hands out as if in greeting. Also it seemed somehow fitting to learn through his obituary that his middle name was Homer. What a good middle name for such a friendly and genuine guy.

“I just loved Patrick,” said Martinsville Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson. “He had a sense of humor that just made you smile. Always polite, cheerful, and respectful. I enjoyed his visits to Council because no matter what the topic he brought to us, there was always a smile and almost always a chuckle. He was a delightful young man! He will be missed!”

Patrick once ran for City Council. Ever after, he still carried and proudly showed his business cards with his slogan, “Vote for Wright and you won’t be wrong. You can’t go wrong with Wright.”

I mostly saw him at the Martinsville Library, one of the main places he spent time. Lately, he’d often be there at a table studying out of his GED books, and he liked to talk about his progress toward completion. His obituary states that “he would be elated to know that an honorary degree will be awarded posthumously.”

Pam Cobler knew



Holly Kozelsky



Patrick Wright’s obituary photo

Patrick through the monthly community meetings of Disabilities Unlimited, of which she is the Community Advocate. “Patrick was always thoughtful in his comments, loyal to attending the meetings, and always seemed joyful with a great attitude. He was a joy to be around, and his smile and kind words will be missed,” she said.

His obituary said he often visited the Virginia Museum of Natural History. I don’t go there enough to have run into him there, but I did once call him into the MHC Heritage Museum, where I’m the executive director. One chilly autumn morning, I looked out through the window and saw him walking by. I went out to greet him and invited him inside.

He was walking to the store to buy a cup, he said; his cup had broken.

“A cup!” I exclaimed. “We have cups here! Lemme give you one.”

Patrick came in and had a look around our local history museum. He talked a great deal about some of the exhibit items.

Some of those comments connected what he saw to what he’d been studying lately for his GED. He was very proud of his progress to-

ward earning his GED.

I usually bring my lunches for work from home, and every now and then, when I’ve made a big batch of something, I bring enough leftovers for a couple of days’ worth of midday meals. It was great fortune that on the day Patrick came, I had a gracious plenty of lasagna, broccoli and salad. I invited Patrick to join me for lunch, but by then he was ready to head on. I packed him a proper home-cooked meal that he took home with him and could heat up that night in the microwave.

Little did I know that that was the last I’d see of Patrick.

We often get some chance to say goodbye to people with official roles in our life: When family members, co-workers or close friends are in health decline or have been in an accident, we’re notified.

But then there are those people, like Patrick, who are important parts of the fabric of a community. We did not have any relationship beyond just seeing each other at the same places and events around town; Patrick was always just “there.” Always a part of things.

Until he’s not.

And his passing leaves quite a void.

Homer Dillard Post

to hold fundraiser

The American Legion Homer Dillard Post # 78 will have a Fish Fry on Saturday, April 12, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at its post home, located at 139 Creekside Drive, Martinsville, Va.

Fish sandwiches are \$9, home-

made desserts are \$2, and sodas or water are \$1.

This is a drive-thru event with limited dining-in options. Call (276) 224-5679 or (276) 340-5169 to place an order.

First Public Meeting

Old Bassett Heights Housing Rehabilitation Project

The County of Henry will hold a Public Hearing / Community Meeting on Monday, April 7, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at the Henry County Administration Building, in the Summerlin Board Room; otherwise known as the Board of Supervisor’s Meeting Room, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Collinsville VA., in order to solicit public input on local community development and housing needs in relation to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for a project in the Old Bassett Heights Community located in Bassett, VA.

Information on the amount of funding available, the requirements on behalf of low-and moderate-income persons, eligible activities, plans to minimize displacement and provide displacement assistance as necessary will be available. Citizens will also be given the opportunity to comment on the County of Henry’s past use of CDBG funds. All interested citizens are urged to attend. For additional information, contact Micah Montgomery, Community Development Specialist by phone at (276)634-2517, Virginia Relay Number 711 or by email [mmontgomery@henrycountyva.gov](mailto:mmontgomery@henrycountyva.gov). Comments and grievances can be submitted in writing to the County of Henry at P.O. Box 7 Collinsville, VA 24078. If you plan to attend and have any special needs requirements, please call the number listed above.

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

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# OPINION

## Regarding Trump Derangement Syndrome

This week, five Minnesota Republican state senators introduced a bill that would classify “Trump Derangement Syndrome” as a mental illness.

What is “Trump Derangement Syndrome?” Often shortened to TDS, it’s a pejorative term used to describe criticism of or negative reactions to President Donald Trump, with the implication that these negative reactions are completely irrational. The term is used by Trump supporters to discredit those who criticize him as being illogical and deranged.

The Minnesota bill classifies TDS as a mental illness marked by “acute onset of paranoia” regarding the Trump presidency. Symptoms include “Trump-induced general hysteria, which produces an inability to distinguish between legitimate policy differences and signs of psychotic pathology in President Donald J. Trump’s behavior.”

Let’s start with the most obvious point: this isn’t how medicine works. The trucking industry cannot petition the government to add White Line Fever to the DSM-5 any more than these Senators can pass a bill declaring a new mental illness.

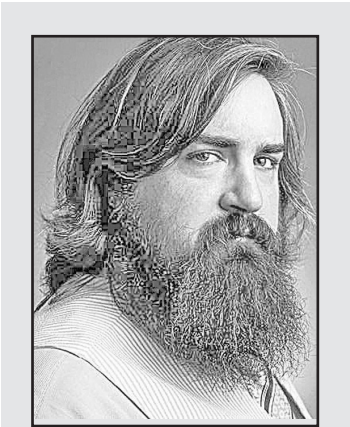
But let’s say that this bill somehow gets passed. What incentive would the bill’s five co-sponsors — Senators Glenn Gruenhagen, Justin Eichorn, Nathan Wesenberg, Steve Drazkowski, and Eric Lucero, in case you were curious — have to gain from Trump Derangement Syndrome becoming an officially recognized mental illness?

(A LATE BREAKING UPDATE: On March 17, Sen. Justin Eichorn, a married father of four, was arrested for allegedly attempting to solicit sex from a 16 year old girl.)

To answer that question, we should look to America’s new best pal Russia, the inventor of something called “sluggish schizophrenia.”

Sluggish schizophrenia, also known as slow progressive schizophrenia, was a medical condition that appeared in the U.S.S.R. in the 1960s and mysteriously vanished with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Soviet doctors tended to find evidence of sluggish schizophrenia in



By Ben R. Williams

people with no other mental health issues — even in people who showed no signs of schizophrenia. The one thing that sufferers of sluggish schizophrenia had in common was that they were political dissidents who had openly criticized the government.

Once these dissidents were diagnosed with sluggish schizophrenia, their civil rights disappeared. They were rendered unemployable. In many cases, they were even drugged with antipsychotics against their will to wash away all those nagging desires to speak openly and honestly.

If the TDS bill were to pass in Minnesota, it could pave the way for anyone who speaks out against Trump to be adjudicated as a mental defective. This would prevent dissenters from owning firearms and, depending on the state, it might also prevent them from voting. It could even serve as a one-way ticket to those mental health work farms that Robert F. Kennedy Jr. keeps rasping on about.

Do I think this bill will pass? No, I don’t. But the next one might. Or the one after that. Or the one after that.

This bill represents one of the most blatant attacks on free speech that we’ve seen so far in the early days of this Presidency, though it certainly won’t be the last volley fired at the First Amendment.

Perhaps the real mental health condition that should be studied is American Dream Delusion Syndrome.

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## Education leader Dr. Stewart Roberson to speak at P&HCC Commencement

Patrick & Henry Community College has announced that Dr. Stewart Roberson, chairman of the Patrick County Education Foundation (PCEF) Board, will deliver the commencement address for P&HCC’s 2025 graduation ceremony.

Roberson is the chair of the Board of Shareholders for Moseley Architects and a professor at the University of Virginia. He previously served as superintendent of schools in both Hanover County and Falls Church, Virginia, and has worked in education since 1977. He has been recognized as a Virginia Business Virginia 500 Power List member, a Virginia Foundation for Community College Education board member emeritus, and an honorary member of The American Institute of Architects (AIA) of Virginia.

Currently, Roberson serves as chair of the Board of Directors for Moseley Architects, the Forum Club of Richmond, the UVA K-12 Advisory Council, and the VCU Autism Center for Excellence. He is also a trustee for the Virginia Foundation of Independent Colleges and AdvancED. Additionally, he serves on the Board of Directors for the Prince William County Education Foundation, CodeVA, and the Cognia State Advisory Committee.

“It is a true joy to be invited to have a front-row seat on May 17 to witness the pride and accomplishments of the P&HCC Class



of 2025! That day will be a terrific one of celebration as everyone applauds the graduates and the difference they will all make in our world,” Roberson said.

P&HCC President Dr. Greg Hodges added, “We are so grateful to Dr. Roberson for his advocacy and support of P&HCC and for his work to make Patrick Promise a reality for Patrick County High School graduates. His passion for education and the future of students in our community is a true inspiration to us all.”

The commencement ceremony will take place in the Stone Hall gymnasium on Saturday, May 17, at 10 a.m.

## Mentorship opportunities available for teens

The Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA announced that its dynamic mentorship program for teens began on February 25 and will continue, thanks to a grant to Piedmont Community Services from the Harvest Foundation. This program is designed to inspire and empower young minds through professional guidance and support, taking place every Tuesday and Thursday at 4:30 p.m., providing a consistent and engaging environment for participants.

The mentorship events will feature a variety of activities that will change each day, ensuring that every session is fresh, exciting, and educational. Teens will have the unique opportunity to connect with professional mentors, fostering valuable relationships that can lead to personal and professional growth.

Mentors help teens develop essential life skills, enhance their academic performance, and build self-confidence. Additionally, mentors can introduce their mentees to new opportunities, including internships

and job shadowing experiences, which are invaluable for career exploration. Mentorship programs like these can also help reduce dropout rates and encourage higher education aspirations among teens.

“We are strong advocates for the power of connection. By cultivating meaningful relationships with professional mentors, we are nurturing not only personal development but also a brighter future for our youth,” said Jakayse Monroe, the YMCA’s director of Youth and Teen Development.

Those interested in joining this mentorship program who are not current YMCA members are encouraged to contact Monroe at jakayse@martinsvilleymca.com or call (276) 632-6427.

The agency will assess eligibility for a complimentary YMCA membership, which provides access to facilities, programs, and a supportive community to enhance the mentorship experience.

Next Sessions are set for Tuesday, March 25 and Thursday, March 27.

## Baldwin

(cont. from page 1)

cludes a paved driveway and sidewalk connection, two paved parking lots, a ¼-mile surface loop, converts the existing tennis courts into basketball courts, a stage, and space for art exhibits or food trucks, transforming the park into an event space.

“One thing we heard from you all, as well as others, was that access to get down to the field was kind of difficult,” said Tim Johnson, the design firm’s director of Outdoor Recreation Planning. The first plan includes a driveway and sidewalk leading into the middle of the field. “This is a very simple design; we are not doing a whole lot of stuff.”

The second plan features a single parking lot near the courts, with an additional overflow parking area in the field. “We have an

off-street parking lot for 22 cars with a drive aisle,” Johnson said. The basketball court in this plan is rotated sideways, with a playground next to it.

However, the second plan would require leveling part of the park, which raised concerns. Rain could make the ground too soft for accessible parking.

Mayor LC Jones said, “You have to think of the handicap accessibility with parking in wet, damp areas.”

Another key factor in the redesign is the spring deadline for installing new outdoor exercise equipment, which was purchased with grant funding.

“It’s required to be installed by the end of May,” Public Works Director Greg Maggard

said. The placement of the fitness pad in the second design could make grading the area difficult.

The second plan includes a cardio path leading to four separate fitness equipment pads, while the first design separates the exercise area from the basketball court with a fence.

“We’ve already made commitments with the location and placement of the fitness pads, so we would probably be looking at some version of the first option,” said Jones.

While current diagrams include space for the fitness equipment, the city has not finalized a plan. Maggard will send the dimensions of the equipment pads to the design firm, which may revise the proposal accordingly.

## Sports Schedule

The following are the dates and times of local high school teams and their games for the week of March 24-30:				3/25	4:30pm	Girls Tennis Bassett at Patrick County	3/28	4pm	Boys Tennis Alleghany at Bassett
					4:30pm	Boys Tennis Patrick County at Bassett		5pm	Baseball Bassett at Carroll County
					7pm	Girls Soccer Staunton River at Magna Vista		5pm	Baseball Martinsville at Patrick County
3/24	5pm	Baseball	Patrick County at Bassett					7pm	Baseball Magna Vista at Salem
	5pm	Baseball	Christiansburg at Magna Vista		7pm	Boys Soccer Magna Vista at Staunton River		7pm	Girls Soccer Bassett at Staunton River
	5pm	Baseball	Floyd County at Martinsville (Hooker Field)					7pm	Girls Soccer Magna Vista at Franklin County
	5pm	Softball	Patrick County at Bassett	3/26	5pm	Baseball Floyd County at Bassett		7pm	Boys Soccer Staunton River at Bassett (Smith River Complex)
	5pm	Softball	Christiansburg at Magna Vista		5pm	Softball Floyd County at Bassett			
	7pm	Girls Soccer	Bassett at Patrick County		5pm	Girls Tennis Magna Vista at Franklin County		7pm	Boys Soccer Franklin County at Magna Vista (Smith River Complex)
	7pm	Girls Soccer	Carroll County at Martinsville		5pm	Boys Tennis Franklin County at Magna Vista	4/29	4:30pm	Boys Tennis Carlisle at Eastern Mennonite
	7pm	Boys Soccer	Patrick County at Bassett (Smith River Complex)		5:30pm	Baseball Magna Vista at Chatham	4/30	4:30pm	Boys Tennis Carlisle at Hargrave Military Academy
	7pm	Boys Soccer	Martinsville at Floyd County		5:30pm	Softball Magna Vista at Chatham			
					7pm	Boys Soccer Tunstall at Bassett (Smith River Complex)			



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**March 26, 2025 - 9:00 a.m. to Noon**  
**April 3, 2025 - 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**  
**April 7, 2025 - 9:00 a.m. to Noon**  
**April 17, 2025 - 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**  
**April 30, 2025 - 9:00 a.m. to Noon**  
**May 8, 2025 - 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

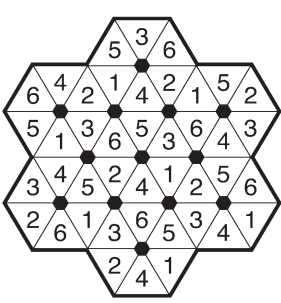
If no hearings are scheduled for a particular day, the hearing will be cancelled and advertised.

**By order of the City of Martinsville Board of Equalization**  
**James M. Wyatt, III, Chairman**

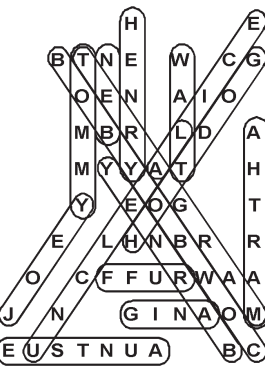
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D	E	S				N	E	D		S	N	E	E	R	S		I	R	A	T	E	

### SCRAMBLERS

solution

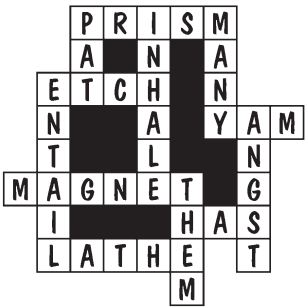
1. Leap 2. Scorn; 3. Extent; 4. Solve

Today's Word

**TAXES**

### FEAR & THE KNIGHT

answer



### Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

1	4	7	8	9	3	2	6	5
3	2	5	1	4	6	7	9	8
8	9	6	7	5	2	3	4	1
7	5	4	2	8	9	6	1	3
6	1	9	3	7	5	4	8	2
2	8	3	4	6	1	5	7	9
4	3	2	6	1	8	9	5	7
5	6	1	9	3	7	8	2	4
9	7	8	5	2	4	1	3	6



Crossing the Lines

News snippets from outside the city/county lines ...

Board delays reassessment, discusses budget proposal, tax rate

The Patrick County Board of Supervisors approved a motion to cap the estate tax rate, delay the reassessment, and continued discussions about the proposed fiscal year 2025-26 budget at its March 10 meeting.

After voting to set the real estate tax rate at not more than 73 cents per \$100 of assessed value, which matches the current fiscal year's rate, the board also approved a motion to delay the county's next real estate reassessment until Jan. 1, 2027.



Commissioner of Revenue Glennda Morse requested the Board of Supervisors delay the real estate assessment by two years, or until January 1, 2027.

Commissioner of Revenue Glennda Morse explained that Virginia law requires a general reassessment of real estate every four years. However, counties with a population of 50,000 or fewer may, by majority vote, extend the reassessment cycle to five or six years.

Also discussed was a proposed 'Access Control System' for court proceedings held on the third floor, as requested by General

District Court Judge Joan Ziglar, according to discussion at the meeting.

County Administrator Beth Simms said that according to Ziglar's request from last year, the first phase of the access control plan was for a single point of entry. "Because right now, there are quite a few exits in this building. So, the first phase will be a single point of entry with all the oth-

er" entries and exits secured.

"We can all wish and want, but that doesn't necessarily mean that's a requirement," Andrew Overby, vice chairman and of the Dan River District, said, and added the county's current security measures were sufficient.

Simms said Ziglar may disagree with that assessment, and added the security requested

Berry, Wood Brothers Racing claim victory in NASCAR Cup Series Pennzoil 400



Josh Berry, driver of the #21 Motorcraft/Quick Lane Ford, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Pennzoil 400 at Las Vegas Motor Speedway on March 16, 2025 in Las Vegas, Nevada. (Photo by Jonathan Bachman/Getty Images)

is outlined in the state code.

Overby said it isn't and noted the requirements Simms referenced were for circuit courts, not for Juvenile and Domestic Relations or General District courts.

"We have this floor secured by a deputy all day long, and I believe that what we have meets the requirements and we do not need to secure

the entire facility. I just spent half the day over at Carroll County looking at their facility today, they have absolutely no access control for the entire building with the exception of the court wing, and that is where the court clerk and everybody for the courts is located. Everything else in the building is completely open, they use a key for every door," he said.

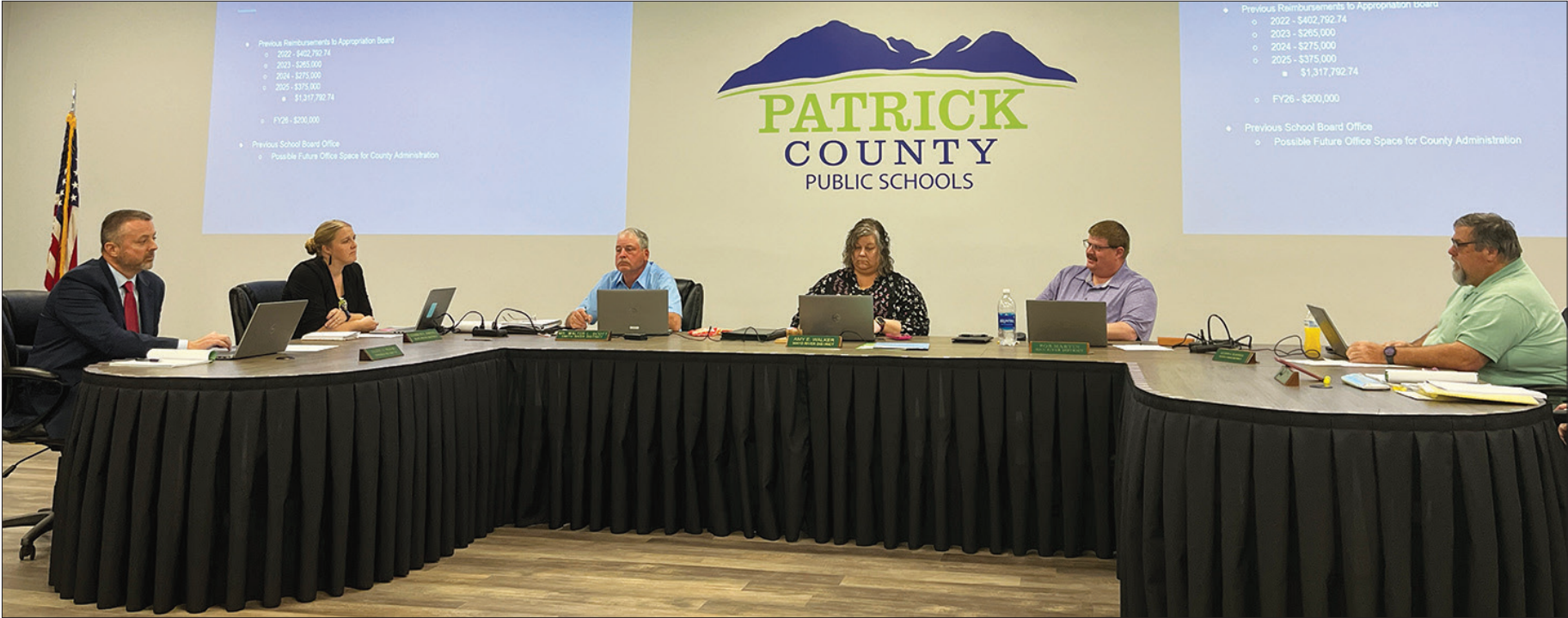
As long as the third

floor is staffed with the deputy as required to do so, Overby said he doesn't think security measures need to go any further.

"If there's a concern with people walking into county administration – lock the door," he said.

"So, just let her know that it is the Board of Supervisors' opinion that we meet the requirements," Simms asked.

School board approves \$36.7 million budget for next fiscal year



The Patrick County School Board approved the \$36,747,259.98 fiscal year 2025-2026 budget at its March 11 meeting.

The Patrick County School Board approved its more than \$26 million proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Schools Superintendent Jason Wood said this \$36,747,259.98 is the first budget in a couple of years the division didn't have federal funds for some staffing positions.

"We had some success coaches, some other assistants that we were not able to continue with

their employment. Each year over the last four years our 'Other Amendments' to our budget and also our ESSER/CARES funds have decreased, and those funds have been exhausted. Now it's just reports we get to send to the state about how we did spend it," he said.

As a result, the division is operating on a tight budget. Because of the calculation tool and the division's lowering enrollment, Wood said it's an-

ticipated to get even tighter for upcoming budgets.

The budget follows the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) model guidance, Wood said.

"The majority of all of our line items fall within their range other than Transportation because we're a very rural community, and our Technology because we're a one-to-one school division, and then our size makes that also difficult," he said.

None of the Above to headline PCMA show



None of the Above will headline the Saturday, March 22 Patrick County Music Association (PCMA) show.

None of the Above will headline the Patrick County Music Association (PCMA) show on Saturday, March 22, at the Rotary Building in Stuart. Doors open at 5 p.m., with music starting at 6 p.m.

PCMA President Denny Alley described None of the Above as a Surry County-based group known for playing a wide variety of music.

"They're really a good band. I

FOIA expert: Meetings with supervisors followed law

The Feb. 26 closed-session meeting of the Economic Development Authority (EDA) and a West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) meeting on Feb. 27, both of which included three county supervisors, did not violate Virginia's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) laws, according to Alan Gernhardt, executive director of the FOIA Advisory Council.

The quorum, or a majority, of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors to attend the closed session meeting of the EDA includ-

ed Clayton Kendrick, who is the county's appointed liaison; Andrew Overby, who had requested to attend; and Steve Marshall.

The WPPDC meeting also included three members: Kendrick, Jonathan Wood and Marshall.

Gernhardt explained that while the presence of three supervisors meets the criteria for a meeting, their attendance was not considered an official board meeting because the members did not interact or discuss business with each other.

mean, they all have the ear monitors like the Lonesome River Band, where they can hear and play, walk around through the audience," Alley said.

The event will also feature a

performance by Johnny & Wendy Dearmon.

For more information or to watch past performances, visit Facebook.com/PatrickCountyMusicAssociation.

1-3-5-7-9

1-3-5-7-9

1-4-7-9:15

1-3-5-7-9

1-3-5-7-9

1-3-5-7-9

Hollywood Cinema  
beside Walmart  
Martinsville 276-656-3456





# Puzzle Time



## FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

♥AYM  
HENLIA  
TELAH  
HMTE  
NALETI  
♥PTA  
♥NAYM  
♥NTSAG  
♥SHA  
ANTGEM  
RSPMI  
HECT

Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. **HAGNEC** becomes **CHANGE** ). Prepare to use only **ONE** word from any marked ( ♥ ) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥**RATHE** becomes **HATER** or **EARTH** or **HEART** ). Fit each string's word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. ID tag is reversed. 2. Clip is added to lunch box. 3. Leg is moved. 4. Stair railing is different. 5. Foot is moved. 6. Window panes are different.

## MAGIC MAZE

● DENNIS THE MENACE

E Q N K H D A X U R P M J G D  
A X V S Q N K I H F D A X E V  
T Q O M J B T N E H W F C G C  
A Y W U R P O E N N A I O L J  
H F D B Z S M B R X L D V A T  
R Q O M L K M Y Y A T I H H F  
D B Z I Y W Y V E O G T R T Q  
O N W L K E I L H N B R H R F  
D C A Z O X C F F U R W A A W  
V U S J R N Q O G I N A O M N  
M K J E U S T N U A I H B C F

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR MR. —

Alice  
Aunt Sue  
Barney  
Ben

Cowboy Bob  
Gina  
Henry  
Hot Dog

Joey  
Margaret  
Martha  
Ruff

Tommy  
Uncle Al  
Walt

## Super Crossword

CROSS WORDS

**ACROSS**  
1 Swing by  
6 Sop up  
12 Fez or beret  
15 General — chicken  
19 Preface  
20 "Hello" singer  
21 Santa — winds  
22 Eight, in Berlin  
23 Alternative to potstickers  
26 Trevi  
27 Golf prop  
28 Requiring lots of attention  
29 L-P linkup  
30 — Up My Heart" (1997 "NSYNC song)  
32 Call before the court  
35 Touchy topic  
37 Skit-filled NBC show, in brief  
38 Texas-Louisiana border river  
41 Three, in Paris  
42 H.G. Wells' Doctor Moreau, e.g.  
46 Penetrating

47 Get older  
50 Give off  
51 Shaggy's nickname for his dog  
52 Pollen lover  
53 Actress  
54 "Life Is Good" rapper  
55 Letter after pi  
56 212 degrees Fahrenheit, for water  
61 "Yup"  
63 Big Apple sch.  
66 Alpha Sig, e.g.  
67 Speaks from a soapbox  
68 Right after being baked  
72 Fake: Prefix  
75 Stalagmite site  
76 Camera type, in brief  
77 Acting award  
81 Brand of hard cider  
84 Google Play download  
86 Tokyo sash  
87 Prefix with byte or ton  
88 Suffix with Euclid

89 An ex-Trump  
92 Fix typos, say  
93 Plus more: Abbr.  
94 \$5 bills, in slang  
96 Intense controversy  
99 "That doesn't ring —"  
101 Regressed  
102 — -la-la  
103 Group of warriors in "Kung Fu Panda"  
106 Church part for the clergy  
110 Chant  
111 Boxing great  
112 Flummoxed  
115 Suffix with Motor  
116 British prep school  
117 Oxidizer in liquid rocket propellants  
122 Swedish soprano  
Jenny  
123 '50s prez  
124 — Mae (HUD corp.)  
125 Yo-yo part  
126 Lucy's guy  
127 Toon  
Flanders  
128 Villains' looks

129 What nine key words in this puzzle are synonyms of  
**DOWN**  
1 Panorama  
2 Entomb  
3 Navigate  
4 A Gershwin brother  
5 Male tabby  
6 Eve of old TV  
7 — one's time  
8 Missile in the Gulf War  
9 "Heavens!"  
10 Shred  
11 — Stakes (horse race)  
12 Kayak cousin  
13 "Gemini Man" director Lee  
14 Grazing land  
15 "Proud Mary" star — P. Henson  
16 Makes the Billboard Top 40, e.g.  
17 Of a resistance unit  
18 Artery insert  
24 Like Brits  
25 Pertaining to  
31 Black, to Poe  
33 Aide: Abbr.  
34 U.S. "Ltd."  
35 Female sib

36 Dutch artist  
Jan  
38 — -Cat  
39 From — Z  
40 Lettuce type  
42 Option list  
43 East Asian nanny  
44 Platter  
45 — Lodge (motel chain)  
46 Actor Harvey brother  
48 Heredity unit  
49 Wolfs down  
52 Malaise, with "the"  
53 Horse colors  
55 Little — (the Ocean State)  
57 Proposal  
58 Original NYC subway line  
59 State exec.  
60 Before surgery, in brief  
62 "Star Trek" lieutenant  
64 Agave plants  
65 Salt Lake City native  
69 Additionally gametes  
70 Fertilizable gametes  
71 Chimp's kin  
72 Book division  
73 Vexed state  
74 Dairy case  
containers  
78 Musical finale  
79 Somewhat  
80 Act of liturgy  
82 Film units  
83 Uses a trowel  
85 Noodles in peanut sauce  
90 Battle (for)  
91 Additionally  
92 Israel's Abba  
94 Vast stretch  
95 Large tuna  
96 Wild rants  
97 Gorilla, e.g.  
98 Historic time  
100 Olympic swimmer  
Matt  
101 Actress  
Taylor  
103 Grazing land  
104 De-knot  
105 Renowned  
106 Asteroid found in 1801  
107 Chocolate drink  
108 T-man Ness  
109 Big dipper  
112 Comic Meara  
113 Rake prong  
114 Mix, as paint  
118 Luau guitar, for short  
119 Martini liquor  
120 Longtime CBS series  
121 30-day mo.

## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- A rainbow on Venus is called a "glory."
- LEGO bricks withstand compression better than concrete! An ordinary plastic LEGO brick can support the weight of 375,000 other bricks before it fails, which would theoretically allow you to build a tower nearing 3.5 km in height, but scaling that up to house-size bricks would prove too cost prohibitive.
- Giraffes are 30 times more likely to get hit by lightning than people are.
- Your brain is constantly eating itself, in a process called phagocytosis, where cells envelop and consume smaller cells or molecules to remove them from the system. Luckily, phagocytosis isn't painful or harmful, but helps preserve gray matter.
- Identical twins don't have the same fingerprints.
- The sun makes a sound in the form of pressure waves, but it's far beyond the range of human hearing.
- A comet smells like rotten eggs, urine, burning matches and almonds.
- One in 18 people have a third nipple. Known as polythelia, it's caused by a mutation in inactive genes.
- Starfish don't have bodies. Along with other echinoderms such as sea urchins and sand dollars, their entire "bodies" are technically classed as heads.
- There are roughly three ginger male cats to one ginger female. The ginger gene is found on the X chromosome, meaning female cats would require two copies of the gene to become ginger while males need just one.
- Martial artists who smile before the start of a match are more likely to lose.
- At a temperature of 54,000 F, a lightning bolt is five times hotter than the surface of the sun.
- In the U.S., murder rates reportedly rise by 2.7% over the summer.

\*\*\*

**Thought for the Day:** "All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of letting go and holding on." — *Havelock Ellis*

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## Weekly SUDOKU

	4	8	5	7				
7		2	6			3		
		5						1
	8			1	3		9	
			2		9			
					5	2		
		9	1				7	
	3		9	5			6	
4					6		3	

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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## SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦♦

♦ Easy ♦♦ Medium ♦♦♦ Difficult

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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

**A**LL GOOD PLAYERS SHUFFLE THEIR FEET FIRMLY INTO THE SAND WHEN PLAYING ALL TYPES OF BUNKER SHOTS. THE CHIEF REASON IS TO INSURE A FIRM STANCE IN UNSTABLE MATERIAL.

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ANOTHER IMPORTANT REASON IS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE TEXTURE AND CONSISTENCY OF THE SAND NEEDED TO PROPERLY PLAN THE SHOT, AND OBTAINABLE UNDER THE RULES ONLY VIA THE FEET.

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## SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Spring  
**PALE** \_\_\_\_\_

Deride  
**CORNS** \_\_\_\_\_

Degree  
**TEXTEN** \_\_\_\_\_

Answer  
**LOVES** \_\_\_\_\_

**TODAY'S WORD**

\_\_\_\_\_, I hear they're going up!"

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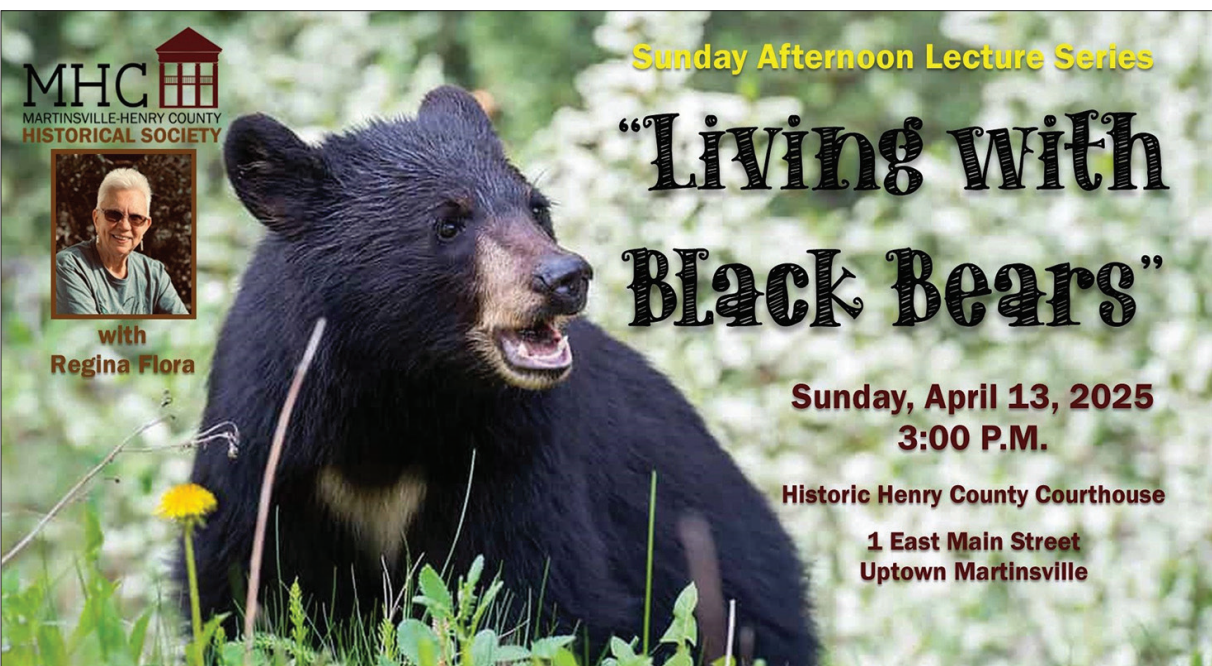
# Historical Society to host “Living with Black Bears” lecture

The Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society will present “Living with Black Bears” with Regina Flora as part of its Sunday Afternoon Lecture Series on Sunday, April 13, at 3 p.m. The event will take place at the Historic Henry County Courthouse, 1 E. Main St., Uptown Martinsville.



Regina Flora

Allegheny mountains and around the Great Dismal Swamp. Black bears capture human admiration and interest like few other wildlife species. Residents, communities, local governments, and the Department of Wildlife Resources share the responsibility in preventing problems and keeping bears wild. Admission to the lecture is free. The



Historic Henry County Courthouse is fully accessible, and the Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Museum will be open following the presentation. Flora is an assistant

educator with the Dan River Basin Association. She earned a bachelor’s degree in professional communications from Old Dominion University and a master’s degree in occupational

and technical studies with a concentration in education. She is a Virginia Master Naturalist, chairs education outreach for the Southwest-ern Piedmont Master Naturalist chapter,

and participates in the Citizen Water Quality Monitoring program. Additionally, she serves as a southern ambassador for Girls Who Hike Virginia, leading official hikes.

# Public safety employees graduate from fire academy

A trio of Henry County Public Safety employees — Lt. Crystal Harbour, Aliyah Wimbush, and Michael Elliot — recently completed and graduated from the Virginia Fire Officers Academy.



Lt. Crystal Harbour



Aliyah Wimbush



Michael Elliot

# Prepare now for potential extreme spring weather

Severe weather such as tornadoes, strong winds, hailstorms, flash floods and lightning can often accompany the arrival of spring, which is just around the corner. The State Corporation Commission’s Bureau of Insurance reminds Virginians that severe weather can strike anywhere and anytime. Protect yourself, your loved ones and your property physically and financially by planning ahead. “Don’t wait until it’s too late,” said Virginia Insurance Commissioner Scott A. White. “Assess your risk now and make sure you have the insurance coverage you need if severe spring weather damages your home, business, vehicles or other property. If you have questions, contact your insurance agent or company or the Bureau of Insurance.” Virginians are encouraged to:

- Review your insurance policies and update them, if needed. Understand what they do and do not cover, as well as any limits on coverage or deductibles you may have to pay when filing a claim.
- Create a detailed inventory of your belongings including photos, serial numbers, videos and receipts. A home inventory can help facilitate the claims process if damage occurs. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners’ free home inventory app – available through the App Store and Google Play – can make

creating a home inventory easy.

- Keep electronic copies of your homeowners, auto and other insurance policies with your home inventory files and store paper files in a secure, fireproof and waterproof place. Take these documents with you if you must evacuate. These records will contain your policy numbers and the phone numbers of your insurance companies in case you have questions or need to file a claim.
- Keep in mind that standard homeowners, renters and commercial insurance policies issued in Virginia typically do not cover damage caused by floods, surface water or storm surge. Insurance coverage for direct flood and flood-related damage to homeowners, renters and businesses in eligible communities is available through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and some private insurers. There is typically a 30-day waiting period before a flood insurance policy takes effect. To learn more, contact your insurance agent; call the NFIP at 877-336-2627; or visit floodsmart.gov.

Automobile other-than-collision insurance coverage, often called “comprehensive” insurance coverage, helps pay to repair or replace vehicles if they are stolen or damaged by such things as fire, water, wind, hail, vandalism, glass breakage, falling objects or contact with

an animal. Know what to do if your home, business, vehicles or other property are damaged due to a severe weather event. The Bureau recommends the following:

- Once the danger or risk has passed, contact your insurance company or agent as soon as possible.
- Make any necessary emergency repairs and take reasonable steps to prevent further damage to your property once it is safe to do so.
- Make a list of all damage to your property and include photographs, notes and repair-related receipts.
- Consult your insurance agent or company before throwing away damaged property.

The Bureau offers free consumer guides for homeowners and commercial property owners with information about what to do when a disaster strikes. These and many other consumer insurance guides are available on the Bureau’s website at [sec.virginia.gov/consumers/insurance](http://sec.virginia.gov/consumers/insurance).

To learn more, contact the Consumer Services Section of the Bureau’s Property and Casualty Division toll-free at 877-310-6560 or in Richmond at 804-371-9185.

For additional emergency preparedness information relating to various types of disasters and hazards, visit the Virginia Department of Emergency Management website at [vaemergency.gov](http://vaemergency.gov).



# Kid Pan Alley leads songwriting workshop at Campbell Court

Kid Pan Alley held group songwriting workshops for 70 third and fourth grade students March 10-12 at Campbell Court Elementary. These workshops were presented as part of Piedmont Arts’ educational outreach programming. They were funded in part by the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. The group’s professional teaching artists Cheryl and Paul Reis guided students through the process of writing original songs together as a team – sparking creativity, building community, and fostering respect for diverse perspectives. The students spent two days writ-

ing and practicing their songs titled, “All About Kindness,” “Math Just Doesn’t Add Up,” “Bassett Bengals,” and “My Friends.” They performed the songs for their teachers and classmates on the final day. Piedmont Arts’ educational outreach programs are presented free of charge to students and schools. The museum reaches more than 5,000 students per year with its programming. To make a donation to the museum’s Kay Smith Education Fund in support of this programming, visit [PiedmontArts.org/secure/donate.cfm](http://PiedmontArts.org/secure/donate.cfm). For more information on educational outreach, exhibits and events, visit [PiedmontArts.org](http://PiedmontArts.org).

See more at [www.henrycountyenterprise.com](http://www.henrycountyenterprise.com)



# Safety initiative launched to prevent accidents involving farm equipment this spring

Spring is when drivers share the road with farmers moving oversize equipment. And when normal traffic meets with larger, slower vehicles, there's an increased risk of accidents.

That is one of the reasons the Virginia Farm Bureau Farm Safety Program started a new initiative—Safety Awareness for Farm Equipment on Roadways, or SAFER.

The initiative kicked off with a contest to raise awareness of slow-moving and large farm equipment on the roadways, and the potential dangers involved in transporting them.

The Farm Bureau safety program is inviting community groups and civic and youth organizations to create visual displays depicting the size difference between farm equipment and regular vehicles. The goal is to have displays in high-traffic public areas that will help make drivers more aware of farm equipment on the roadways.

“If you can't see a farmer, then they can't see you,” noted Matt Nuckols, chair of Farm Bureau Farm Safety Advisory Committee. “And besides, it's illegal to pass on a roadway with a double solid line—even if the driver ahead of you is going

extremely slow.”

Additionally, one contest category is for educational campaigns that don't involve a physical display, and another is for the most effective use of media channels to educate drivers about the presence of farm equipment on roadways.

The contest runs through Oct. 31, and winners will be eligible for thousands of dollars in cash prizes. For details, visit [vafb.com/Safety](http://vafb.com/Safety).

Many Virginia farmers don't have the luxury of cultivating all their acreage on one farm. They often have to move equipment from field to field as they plant, tend and harvest crops.

Springtime in Virginia is when farmers are planting corn and soybeans while also harvesting barley, rye and wheat. Some of them also start cutting hay in May, Nuckols explained. The equipment needed for planting and harvesting includes applicators, balers, combines and sprayers, some of which can be up to 16 feet wide. When the average highway lane is 10 to 12 feet, that means there's not much room for maneuvering.

Drivers shouldn't assume that a farmer can

pull over to let someone pass. Shoulder conditions may make it unsafe to pull heavy equipment to the side of the road.

But make sure you know the farmer's intentions before passing.

Farmers with large equipment are usually easy to spot. Virginia law requires vehicles that travel slower than 25 mph and are being driven on public roads to be equipped with rear-mounted triangular slow-moving vehicle emblems. These reflective orange signs act as a warning to approaching drivers to slow down.

Farm equipment can't stop quickly. For example, if the equipment is traveling 15 mph, it would take a car traveling 55 mph 5 seconds to brake 300 feet—the length of a football field—to avoid a collision.

Often drivers think they can quickly pass farming equipment, but what if the farmer is planning to make a left-hand turn while you're passing?

“It could be disastrous,” Nuckols said. “And because farm equipment is so large, the car may take the brunt of the damage.”



## Richmond Ballet performs ‘Cinderella’ for more than 1,100 students as part of Piedmont Arts’ educational outreach

Dancers from the Richmond Ballet Studio Company performed “Cinderella” for 1,141 elementary students on March 3 at schools in Martinsville and Henry County. These performances were part of Piedmont Arts’ educational outreach programming and were funded in part by the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Students from Campbell Court, Sanville, Albert Harris and Mt. Olivet elementary schools saw performances of this classic tale with a twist. This version was told from the viewpoint of the titular character’s bossy stepsister, but retained the well-known plot of a kindhearted girl who is treated unfairly and perseveres with the help of her fairy godmother.

The performances were filled with lots of comedic moments and offered students a compelling introduction to the language of ballet through a combination of storytelling, audience participation and dance. The dancers engaged the students throughout the performance by encouraging positive communication and including them in the story by teaching them a special dance, how to conduct music and how to execute a proper bow. After each performance, the dancers held a Q&A where they fielded questions from students about pointe shoes and how to stand in them, gravity-defying lifts and the behind-the-scenes magic of a quick costume change.

Richmond Ballet is the state ballet of Virginia. This premier

dance organization champions ballet and is dedicated to awakening, uplifting and uniting human spirits through the power of dance. Dancers in its Studio Company represent the highest level of the professional training program of the School of Richmond Ballet.

Piedmont Arts’ educational outreach programs are presented free of charge to students and schools. The museum reaches more than 5,000 students per year with its programming. To make a donation to the museum’s Kay Smith Arts Education Fund in support of this programming, visit [PiedmontArts.org/secure/donate.cfm](http://PiedmontArts.org/secure/donate.cfm).

For more information on educational outreach, exhibits and events, visit [PiedmontArts.org](http://PiedmontArts.org).

## ‘Investment Insights’ series seeks to inform residents about county finances

**By Cole Hall**

Brandon Martin, Henry County’s public information officer, is working to improve public understanding of how local government funds are used. His new series, Investment Insights, aims to inform residents about how their tax dollars are spent and invested in the community.

As public information officer, Martin is responsible for ensuring the county government communicates effectively with residents. “I’m always looking for different ways to keep the public informed. And I think public education is not something we’ve done as much of in the past, so we’re reaching out,” he said. He attends board meetings, manages the county’s social media accounts, and oversees communications for several public officials.

Martin emphasized that social media updates are an additional resource but encouraged residents to continue contacting their local representatives as well. His goal is to create more av-

enues for citizens to stay informed.

His current focus is on the Board of Supervisors, and he plans to provide ongoing updates about their meetings through social media. “It’s important to remove barriers to people’s understanding of these situations. We can show the trends and how policies are connected and how things that happened two years ago can give you a better outlook on things,” he said.

He noted that public meetings are posted on YouTube, and phone lines remain open for questions. “Being informed on government is a vigilant effort. One social media post isn’t going to give you all the information you need,” he said.

Martin hopes increased transparency will encourage more residents to attend meetings and engage with local government. While social media provides information, he said meetings offer valuable context and allow residents to interact directly with decision-makers.

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## Wanted man arrested after high-speed chase in county



Gregory Yuron Campbell

Henry County Sheriff’s deputies were in the area of Stultz Road in the Collinsville area around 10:05 a.m. on March 13, according to a release from Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis.

The deputies observed a white Chevrolet SUV traveling at a high rate of speed and traveling in the wrong lane into oncoming traffic on Stultz Road.

The white SUV also matched the description of the vehicle that Gregory Yuron Campbell was alleged to be traveling in, deputies observed the driver of the vehicle and were able to identify the driver as Campbell, who was wanted in by Martinsville authorities on three counts of probation violation, with underlying charges of delinquency of a minor, child abuse and felony elude police. He was also wanted in Henry County on three counts of misdemeanor credit fraud, two counts of felony credit card larceny and one count of misdemeanor petty larceny.

Deputies attempted to make a traffic stop, but the vehicle failed to stop and a pursuit ensued, with the Chevrolet allegedly continuing to travel at a high

rate of speed, fleeing from county deputies, Virginia State Police, and Martinsville Police through the Collinsville, Fieldale, and Bassett communities.

The pursuit continued onto Sunset Drive in the Bassett community, where deputies located a woman on the side of the road who appeared injured. Deputies immediately stopped to check the female’s well-being, where she advised deputies that the driver of the vehicle had taken control of her vehicle when she offered him a ride, then would not let her out of the vehicle. When the vehicle’s speed slowed down on Sunset Road, she jumped from the vehicle.

Deputies briefly lost sight of the vehicle, but located it at 1171 Sunset Drive, where the

vehicle had hit a retaining wall on the property. Deputies observed Campbell allegedly running on foot from the location of the vehicle.

Deputies, Virginia State Police Troopers, and a Henry County Sheriff’s Office K-9 team then engaged in a foot pursuit. Campbell was apprehended a short time later in a wooded area off of Sunset Drive, and taken into custody without any additional incident. He was transported to Sovah Martinsville Emergency Room for minor injuries, where he was treated and released. The woman was treated on scene for minor injuries by Henry County Public Safety.

Campbell, 52, of 66 Willow Ct., Martinsville, was charged with abduction by force, elude police, and hit

and run attended/failure to stop — all felony counts. He was also served with the outstanding warrants from Martinsville and Henry County.

Currently, Campbell is being held in the Henry County Adult Detention Center with no bond.

Davis said his office thanks the Virginia State Police, Martinsville Police Department, Henry County Department of Public Safety, and the Bassett Volunteer Fire Department for their assistance with this incident.

“As your sheriff, I want to take a moment to address a paramount concern regarding high-speed pursuits. While our primary duty is to protect and serve you, we must also acknowledge the dangers that these chases can pose,

not only to our officers but to innocent bystanders as well,” Davis added. “High-speed pursuits can lead to serious accidents, injuries, and even loss of life. Our commitment to apprehending violent criminals remains steadfast, but we are equally dedicated to finding a balance that prioritizes the safety of our community.

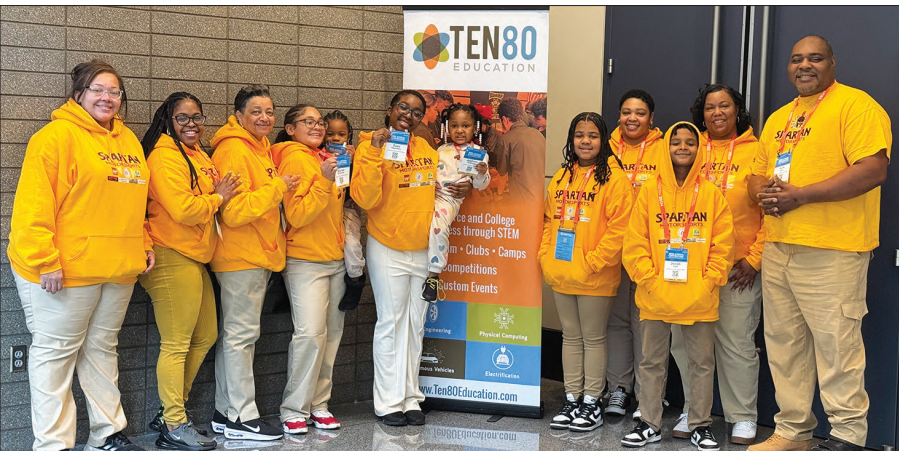
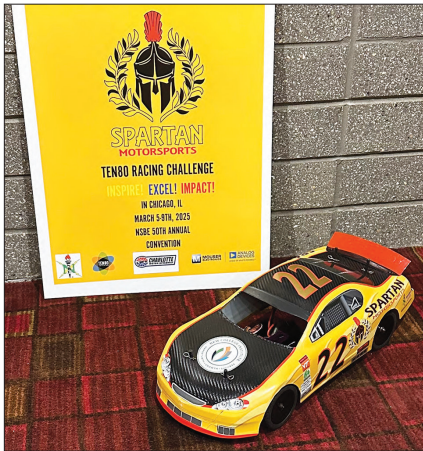
“It is our mission to use pursuit strategies that minimize risks and focus on the greater good. Henry County is a community of rules and laws, and we will not allow violent criminals to have free reign and avoid apprehension. We are constantly evaluating our policies to ensure that we uphold justice while protecting our citizens,” he wrote, adding “thank you for your trust in us.”



# Chapter of National Society of Black Engineers celebrates major wins at annual convention



The Martinsville-Henry County Chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (M-HC NSBE) returned from the NSBE 2025 Annual Convention in Chicago with awards and recognition.



NSB Ten80 Team from left, Shirley Williams, Ronikka Hannans, Simone Redd (advisors), Alyssa Williams, Zoey Hannans, Keegan Redd, Loren Redd (advisor), Josiah Law, Keisha Law and Ken Law (coaches).

The Martinsville-Henry County Chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (M-HC NSBE) returned from the NSBE 2025 Annual Convention in Chicago with remarkable achievements. The chapter’s middle school Ten80 team competed on March 6, securing first place in the race events, showcasing their engineering and problem-solving skills on a national stage. Because of their success at the annual convention, the team was invited to participate in the 2025 Ten80 STEM Challenge Nationals at Charlotte Motor Speedway on April 25-26. “We couldn’t be prouder of these

young students,” said M-HC NSBE head mentor Helen Howell. “This was the first year that we had a middle school Ten80 team, so to come home with a first-place trophy truly shows how remarkable these students are.” Adding to the celebration, two outstanding members of M-HC NSBE were honored with Golden Torch Awards, a prestigious national recognition within NSBE. Anaya Maseko received the Rising Star in Academia (Middle School) award, while Destiny Johnson was named Pre-College Student of the Year (Female). “These accomplishments high-



Anaya Maseko



Destiny Johnson

light the dedication, talent, and hard work of the NSBE students,” said NCI Executive Director Joe Sumner. “We are incredibly proud of their success and look forward to seeing them continue to excel in STEM fields.” Additionally, M-HC NSBE had two MathCounts teams, two Kid-Wind teams and a Black History team that competed at the convention. When the students weren’t competing, they participated in workshops, explored a college fair featuring top universities, and engaged with representatives from more than 300 leading

companies at a career fair. They also had the chance to tour Chicago, visiting landmarks such as former President Obama’s house, various museums, Lake Michigan, and local universities. The M-HC NSBE chapter remains committed to fostering the next generation of engineers and innovators. For more information about M-HC NSBE and how to get involved, visit [www.newcollegeinstitute.org](http://www.newcollegeinstitute.org) and click “REGISTER NOW,” or contact Howell by email at [hhowell1972@yahoo.com](mailto:hhowell1972@yahoo.com) or phone at (276) 252-8501.

# Youth board springs children into reading at Books & Bunnies event



Attendees meet a puppy and staff from the Martinsville Henry County SPCA.

The Harvest Youth Board is thrilled to once again bring joy and learning to the community through its annual Books and Bunnies. This free, family-friendly event will take place on Saturday, March 22nd, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Monogram Smith River Sports Complex, located at 1000 Irisburg Road, Axton, welcoming families from Martinsville and Henry County with children up to age 12. Designed to encourage literacy and community engagement, every child attending will receive a free book. In addition to book giveaways, children will have the chance to connect with local organizations and enjoy a variety of interactive games and activities. Families can also look forward to Kona Ice and Palumbo’s Hoagie House food trucks.

A highlight of this year’s event is the exciting egg hunt at 12 p.m., with 15,000 hidden eggs—including 15 special Harvest eggs. Lucky children who find a Harvest egg will receive a special gift basket filled with fun surprises. This year, the event features a single egg hunt rather than two separate hunts, making it an even bigger adventure for young participants. Madison Crowe, Vice Chair of the Harvest Youth Board and Special Events Committee Chair, sharing her enthusiasm for the event, said, “Seeing the joy on children’s faces as they hunt for eggs, pick out a book, slide down the giant inflatable slide, or receive a balloon animal is truly heartwarming. The hard work and dedication of our Youth Board make a real impact on these kids and their fami-



A youngster attending the Books & Bunnies event hunts for eggs during the egg hunt.

lies, and I’m forever grateful to be part of organizing this incredible event.” This event would not be possible without the dedication of community volunteers. Last year, more than 40 volunteers — many of whom are local youth under the age of 18—worked alongside the Harvest Youth Board to bring Books and Bunnies to life. India Brown, Harvest Youth Board Advisor, expressed her pride in the board’s efforts, “As advisors, Stacy Peters and I are honored to support the Youth Board in bringing their ‘Books and Bunnies’ idea to fruition each year. This is their vision, and we are so proud of their passion for serving the commu-



An attendee shows off her face paint artwork.



Harvest Youth Board members pose under the entrance to Books and Bunnies.

nity and creating local families.” vest Youth Board, a meaningful, fun-filled experience for For more information about the Har-

visit [www.harvestyouthboard.org](http://www.harvestyouthboard.org).

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# Paddle the Dan during April’s outing

The Dan River Basin Association’s (DRBA’s) April 5, First Saturday Outing will feature a section of the Dan River in Rockingham County for a paddle that will use a new access/takeout location between Mayodan and Eden. Long time DRBA volunteers Mark Bishopric and Tom Taylor will coordinate this 4.3 mile (2.5 hour) float past Eagle Falls Island and an area known locally as “the Bent” as spring comes to life along the river.

Participants will meet by 9 a.m. at the Settles Bridge Access, located off Settles Bridge Road at 290 Dan River Road. Dan River Road intersects Settles Bridge Road just south of the bridge and dead ends at the Rockingham County Public Access, to unload boats and gear and set the shuttle.

According to Bishopric, “The batteau era sluices and native American fish traps are readily visible along this stretch of river. This paddle will take out at the Rockingham Game Lands property, a project that started a few years ago with the 1,000-acre purchase by NC Department of Wildlife. The paddling access was sponsored by Duke Energy. This recently completed concrete access provides good parking, and less steep access than typically available on the piedmont stretches of the Dan River.”

Immediately after the paddle starts, there are two ledges, and batteau sluices, at just over a mile downstream when approaching Eagle Falls Island, with one larger ledge and related batteau era stonework for sluices. Another mile downstream, as the river passes tributaries Rockhouse Creek and Roach Creek, “Reese’s Rock” jumps out of the river on the right-hand side. After a few more batteau sluices and



Photo courtesy of DRBA

1.5 miles downstream, we will enter the “NC Game

Lands” property bordering the south side of the river and reach our takeout point.

At normal water levels, this section offers mostly calm waters and Bishopric considers this stretch of the river “novice friendly with one small drop as the river passes Eagle Falls Island.”

Along with natural ledges, paddlers will pass V-shaped fish traps, used for centuries by Native Americans and European settlers to channel fish into nets or baskets during their annual spawning runs.

After loading boats at the Game Lands access, participants will truly be in the center of Rockingham County, depending on the participants route home, you are 5-8 miles away from Eden, Madison, Mayodan, Reidsville or Wentworth and you may enjoy having lunch or visiting a site in these communities. Visit <https://www.visitrockingham.com/> for more information.

Additional interesting facts about this river section’s history, culture, and nearby attractions are found in Maps 51 – 52 of DRBA’s publication, “An Insider’s Guide to the Dan River in North Carolina and Virginia,” available at ShopDRBA. <https://www.danriver.org/support-drba/shop/shop-our-products>

Participants in the outing are asked to provide boat and paddles, life jacket, lunch and water, and to dress in layers of artificial (quick drying) fabric or wool. All participants must sign a waiver prior to the event.

For trip information, contact trip coordinators Bishopric at (336) 627-6204 or email [markb@irvineriver.com](mailto:markb@irvineriver.com) or Taylor at (336) 402-6100.

Outings and meetings of the Dan River Basin Association are open to the public without charge.

## Sign-ups begin for 5th annual Miss Henry County Fair Pageant

The registration period is now open for the 5th annual Miss Henry County Fair Pageant, which will take place on May 31 at the Henry County Recreation Center. Age divisions for the contest range from babies to adults, and no previous pageant experience is required.

“The Miss Henry County Fair Pageant is a fun and exciting opportunity for young ladies in our community to show off their talents, beauty, and poise,” said Roger Adams, director of Henry County Parks and Recreation and the Henry County Fair.

“Winning the Miss Henry County Fair Pageant is more than just a title—it’s an opportunity to inspire,

lead, and shape the future. It opens doors for young ladies to grow, connect with their community, and build a platform that highlights their passions, dreams, and ambitions,” he added.

The winner of the “Miss” category, for ages 17-22, will compete in the Miss Virginia Association of Fairs Pageant in January 2026 in Williamsburg, Virginia, and will represent the Henry County Fair for a year.

The pageant is sponsored by Jones & Deshon Orthodontics and Roanoke Valley Orthodontics. For more information, contact Henry County Parks and Recreation at (276) 634-4640.

Submit your community news and photos to [dhall@theenterprise.net](mailto:dhall@theenterprise.net)

## Congressional staff to hold local hours

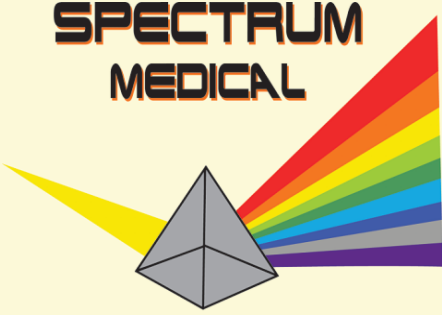
Rep. Morgan Griffith’s Ninth District staff will be available in Henry and Patrick counties on March 26.

- In the Henry County Administration Building, Summerlin Room - Board of Supervisors Meeting Chambers, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville, from 10–11:30 a.m.

- In the Patrick County Administration Building, Conference Room, 106 Rucker Street, Stuart, from 12:30–2 p.m.

In the event of inclement weather (heavy snow, sleet, icy rain, etc.), traveling office hours may be rescheduled to avoid putting constituents at risk. If local schools are closed, then office hours will be closed as well.


Call the Christiansburg Office at (540) 381-5671 or the Abingdon Office at (276) 525-1405 with any questions or to schedule an appointment time in the event of an office hour closure.



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Eugene “Gene” F. Jackson, MPAS, PA-C has been NCCPA Board Certified Physician Assistant since 1979 after having graduated from Alderson Broaddus University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Physician Assistant Studies. Prior to his degree, Gene was a Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force, completing his service in 1975. Gene then entered the U.S. Army National Guard from 1980 to 2005 as the Chief Physician Assistant and honorably discharged as a Colonel in 2005. During his service, Gene also completed his Masters of Physician Assisted Studies with a specialty in orthopedic surgery from the University of Nebraska in 2001. Recently, Gene re-joined our practice as a seasoned provider maintaining his passion of orthopedics and assisting our orthopedic doctors primarily in the clinic. Gene has lived locally in the Danville area for over 25 years and enjoys time outside the office with his wife and two children.

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