

# HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

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(USPS-6)

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## County, school budgets head to vote after public hearings

By Taylor Boyd

The Henry County Board of Supervisors held public hearings for the proposed fiscal year (FY) 2025-2026 school budget and the total county budget at its April 22 meeting.

County Administrator Dale Wagener said the proposed budget recommends \$119,724,257 for the Henry County school system with \$23,398,263 in local funds.

“Unless you have additional changes or recommendations, we have a meeting scheduled for next Tuesday, April 29 at 3 p.m. As of now, the only agenda item is for your consideration of approval of the school budget and the total county budget,” he said.

During the school budget’s public hearing, Jennifer Rabon asked the board to reconsider Carlisle Schools’ request for funding for a School Resource Officer (SRO).

As a mother, Rabon said she has three children attending Carlisle School and went on a field trip with two of them last week.

“At lunchtime, all the teachers and all of our phones started to buzz with an alert from Carlisle School.



Jennifer Rabon asked the Henry County Board of Supervisors to reconsider Carlisle School’s funding request for a School Resource Officer (SRO).

As any parent of a school-aged child when you get those notifications there is that brief moment when you wonder if this is the moment (See County p. 2)



From left, council member Julian Mei, Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson, Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper, Sheriff’s Maj. Laura Hopkins, Mayor LC Jones, council members Rayshaun Gravely and Aaron Rawls are pictured presenting a proclamation for National Corrections Officers and Employees Week.

## Mayor targets ‘unethical practices’ with proposed city probe

By Taylor Boyd

Martinsville Mayor LC Jones directed City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides to work with the city attorney to launch a proposed investigation into the actions of city officials regarding unethical practices, neglect, and misuse of office.

Jones said the investigation would include council members, city employees, constitutional officers, public safety, as well as volunteers who are members of boards and commissions.

“All city operations,” he said.

An investigation is needed, he

said, “in light of the persistent and unfounded slander and defamation all to undermine my character and integrity but along with other council members and employees.” Jones instructed Ferrell-Benavides to reach out to the attorneys to “investigate the actions of council members in regards to unethical practices, neglect, and misuse of office” and to “get some direction on what that would look like for us to move forward, to launch an investigation.”

Following the meeting, Jones said (See Mayor p. 2)



Director of Community Development Eric Payne (left) and Greg Maggard, director of Public Works, gave an update to Martinsville City Council at Tuesday’s meeting.

## Reversion study proposal raises eyebrows among leaders

By Jessica Dillon and Taylor Boyd

**Part I: City leaders react to reversion study proposal**

The Martinsville City Council recently addressed concerns about reversion after Mayor LC Jones mentioned requesting a consolidation study and a reversion study. Many residents opposed past reversion efforts and still do, and council members clarified their positions on whether to support a study or pur-

sue the process.

Jones said he individually asked the city manager for a reversion study and emphasized that it was not discussed by the full council.

“So, it’s not that all of council asked. I’ve said I asked” during “my conversation with the city manager. This is what I would like to see. I would like you to present (it) just (to) the council, to see if all of council would like this. So, nothing is ap-

(See Reversion p. 9)

## PSA board weighs first rate hike in 12 years



PSA General Manager Dale Wagener (left) prepares to give his presentation on the fiscal year 2025-2026 PSA budget. Pictured to the right is PSA Chairman Stuart Bowman. (Contributed photos)

The proposed fiscal year 2025-26 budget for the Henry County Public Service Authority (PSA) includes a recommended \$5 monthly increase in water and wastewater rates to address rising operational costs and ensure continued delivery of safe, reliable service to the community.

This would mark the first adjustment of rates for the PSA in 12 years, a decision driven by escalating costs for treatment, electricity, and essential materials that can no longer be absorbed without compromising service.

(See PSA p. 9)

# Marking 50 years since Vietnam: Two veterans share their stories

By Cole Hall

To mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War on April 30, two local veterans shared their experiences before, during, and after the war.

Curtis R. Millner, Sr., who retired as a warrant officer, served as a maintenance sergeant with an engineer battalion. The unit was responsible for building and maintaining roads, bridges, telephone lines, and other critical infrastructure to keep supply lines open—often while under enemy fire.

Millner enlisted in the Army at just 17 years old.

His deployment to Vietnam began with a surprise phone call while stationed in Germany. “I got a call in the afternoon, tell-



Army veteran Curtis R. Millner, Sr., (second from left) received Martinsville and Henry County’s Outstanding Veteran award in 2021. The award was presented by representatives from the city and county, including Kathy Lawson (far left), Debra Buchanan, and Tommy Slaughter.

ing me I was supposed to be in Vietnam,” he said. “I asked when.” The response was, “well you’re supposed to be there now.” Mill-

ner packed up quickly, brought his wife along, and was transferred from California to Vietnam. He served there from July to De-

ember 1971.

His mission changed again only months later with news of the U.S. withdrawal plan. Millner became part of

Operation Keystone, a large-scale effort to return equipment to the United States under the Vietnamization policy.

“As engineers we were not there to engage the enemy. We were there to build for the war effort,” he said. “My Vietnamese secretary asked me why I wasn’t being attacked as much. It’s because whoever wins (See Vietnam p. 10)

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# County

(cont. from page 1)

that your life is changed forever. Thankfully it was not," she said.

For the last three years Rabon said there's been an SRO on campus funded by Carlisle.

"Henry County also lets us have a vehicle on the premises that gives us a visual cue and hopefully a deterrent if anyone wanted to come to campus" and cause trouble, she said.

Rabon noted Carlisle's tuition ranges from \$6,000-\$14,000 per year, "which is a lot. However, reading through the school budget, I think Henry County is spending over \$16,000 per student for support. So, I feel like we are offering and delivering a very good product for less money," she said.

In other matters, the board:

\*Approved a resolution supporting the Community Development Block Grant application for a project to rehabilitate up to 11 low-to-moderate income residential houses in the Old Bassett Heights Road area.

\*Approved amendments to the bylaws for the Martinsville-Henry County 911 Joint Dispatch Center.

\*Approved the county's participation in the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to coordinate interstate and intrastate mutual aid. \*Approved an additional appropriation of \$17,124 received from the Circuit Court Records Preservation Grant program to preserve marriage bonds and order books dating back to the 1700s.

\*Approved the purchase of a fire truck from Municipal Emergency Services for the Collinsville Volunteer Fire Department and disbursed \$683,292 to the department for the purchase.

\*Approved an additional appropriation of \$1,675,000 to the School Textbook Fund for the purchase of Mathematics and English textbooks.

\*Awarded a contract of \$48,419 to CorrecTeck, Inc., for the pur-



The Henry County Board of Supervisors.

chase of the Spark Electronic Health Records system for the Adult Detention Center.

\*Awarded a contract to EMS Management and Consultants, Inc., for Public Safety and Volunteer EMS and fire billing services. Compensation under this contract is based on the percentage of collections, which historically has resulted in an annual cost of approximately \$65,000.

\*Approved its Six-Year Secondary Road Plan.

\*Heard a general highway update from Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Resident Engineer Lisa Price-Hughes.

\*Conducted a public hearing and approved a change in the county ordinance to reflect a precinct relocation of Fieldale #201 to the Fieldale Apartments Auditorium on Marshall Way. \*Appointed Jay Gilbert to an unexpired term on the Parks & Recreation Board set to expire on June 30, 2025.

# Mayor

(cont. from page 1)



City Council presented the proclamation for National Sexual Assault Awareness Month to Tamika Whitfield of Southside Survivor Response Center.



The city council presented the proclamation for National Arbor Day to Martinsville Tree Board member Heather Loeberger.



PHS Autism Center CEO Officer Billy White accepted the proclamation April as National Autism Awareness Month.

in a Facebook post that these attacks have come not only from certain members of city council but also from city employees and other elected officials.

"Such cowardly actions are devoid of evidence and rely solely on baseless allegations, often amplified by local media that has chosen to participate in this discrediting campaign without substantiating facts," he said.

Jones said he believes the city must embrace transparency as its guiding principle.

"I believe it is the right of every citizen to be informed and engaged throughout this process. Those making these accusations should welcome the opportunity for scrutiny, as should all council members and city employees. Together, we can navigate this political landscape riddled with falsehoods and reveal the documented truth. I eagerly anticipate that day," Jones said in the post.

Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson said her view is that if someone is going to accuse another or make negative comments, then there should be proof.

"If this is just someone making a 'Negative Nelly' comment about somebody that has no proof or no factual basis other than just someone making a statement, then those type of statements need to stop," she said.

Lawson said she needs more information regarding the logistics of the

investigation and who would conduct it before she would commit to supporting it.

"I don't know the answers to the questions. I need more information just like you do. I am neutral at this point. I would like for the name-calling to stop, and if this stops the name-calling, then yes, that's good. I just need more information," she said.

Lawson also said she does not know when more information about the proposed investigation would be available.

"I would say you need to ask the mayor. I didn't make the statement, he did," she said.

Lawson described the call for a potential investigation as both surprising and unsurprising.

"It was one of those things that was like, 'Oh.' Not surprising, but 'Oh,'" she said.

Council member Aaron Rawls said he doesn't think much of Jones' directive.

"I don't mean to make so light of it — I mean, it's ridiculous and it's absurd — but also I have to feel for my city employees and also my citizens. It is actually kind of scary that the mayor of a city is basically talking about doing an inquisition on people," he said.

Rawls said that against the backdrop of a significant undercurrent of

whistleblowers and city employees making protective disclosures, Jones seems aligned with bad actors.

"For whatever reason, he will just not accept he's doing bad stuff in a public government, and he will not stop and look around himself and say, 'oh wait, I'm part of the problem,'" Rawls said, and added that he believes the investigation will ultimately backfire and implicate Jones, other council members, and members of city administration.

"I mean, it's an all-time backfire," he said. "But I also can't say that, because maybe next time it is more serious, and then I just said, 'okay, government inquisition is okay in a free society,' and it's not okay."

"It's a weird situation that I'm taking more lightly than I probably should," Rawls said. "It's a serious thing to a lot of people, and in fairness for the city employees, they're probably not laughing about this at all. They're probably terrified."

While Rawls said he doesn't know the specifics of what Jones means by an investigation, he speculates it may be related to senior-level staff who have reached out to state agencies, elected officials, and attorneys to figure out how to protect themselves.

He said employees are "being asked to do fraudulent things or unethical things" that go against their profession's code of ethics and could cost them their licenses.

"So, it's not just things that are shady. It's things that would cost them their careers. They want to start getting on the record to protect themselves," he said.

Rawls said he believes the investigation could be an attempt by some to get ahead of the situation.

"Some of these people have already committed their findings and sent them to legal counsel, so him doing this is not going to protect Jones and others from retaliation claims. It is fact that there are senior employees at the City of Martinsville that have — let's call it whistleblowing — who have raised concerns about unethical or fraudulent behavior or being asked to do those things. That's fact. That's happened. That is written record. The speculation is why they're doing all of this," he said.

Rawls added that a single member of council cannot unilaterally call for

an investigation.

"Also, this guy is not Saddam Hussein. Like, I don't know who he thinks he is, but you cannot just send inquisitors to people's doors and say, 'give me your phone and we're going to go through your text messages and we're going to read all your emails.' That's not going to happen," he said.

He said he is confident the city's attorneys will give Jones the same advice, if they haven't already.

In a Facebook post, council member Julian Mei apologized to anyone within or outside the city for the turmoil occurring within city government.

"No one should have to live, serve, or work in a climate of fear, resentment, or retribution, and the irresponsibility of public servants perpetuating this is a poor reflection of the many good and decent people who work tirelessly to make our home a wonderful place to live," he said in the post.

Council member Rayshaun Gravely did not return a call for comment, nor had he made a social media post at press time.

In other matters, the council:

\*Heard a presentation on the proposed capital projects for fiscal year 2025-2026.

\*Discussed the 1 Ellsworth lease option.

\*Discussed the allocation of funds for the development of the Commonwealth waterline.

\*Approved a resolution approving lease purchase financing with Bank of America Public Capital Corp - Direct Bank loan to acquire equipment.

\*Approved updates to the joint dispatch center by-laws.

\*Approved the receipt and expense for the awarded Operation Ceasefire Grant.

\*Heard community announcements from Public Information Officer Kendall Davis.

\*Proclaimed April 25 as National Arbor Day.

\*Proclaimed April as National Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

\*Proclaimed April as National Autism Awareness Month.

\*Proclaimed the week of April 4-10 as National Corrections Officers and Employees Week.

\*Approved the April 1, April 7, and April 14 meeting minutes.

\*Approved the Feb. 28 facilitator-provided retreat minutes.

## Initial weekly claims down, continued claims up

According to Virginia Works, 3,270 unemployment insurance weekly initial claims were filed during the week ending April 12, 2025, which is 12.0 percent lower than last week's 3,714 claims and 46.1 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (2,238).

Nearly 68 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (66 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (465); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (269); Retail Trade (246); Manufacturing (223); and Health Care and Social Assistance (209).

Continued weeks claims (18,459) were 4.9 percent higher than last week (17,598) and were 20.9 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (15,263). Nearly 92 percent

of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (62 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (3,529); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,152); Manufacturing (1,848); Health Care and Social Assistance (1,566); and Retail Trade (1,398).

A person who has already filed an initial claim and who has experienced a week of unemployment files a continued claim to claim benefits for that week of unemployment. On a weekly basis, continued claims reflect a good approximation of the current number of insured unemployed workers filing for UI benefits, and are a good indicator of labor market conditions. While continued claims are not a leading indicator, they provide confirming evidence of the direction of the economy.

Call 276-694-3101 or email [submissions@theenterprise.net](mailto:submissions@theenterprise.net) for more information.

# 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, April 29

Community Budget Meeting, 6 p.m., Virginia Museum of Natural History, 21 Starling Ave, Martinsville.

### Thursday, May 1

Henry County School Board School Board Meeting, 6 p.m., Laurel Park Middle School, 280 Laurel Park Avenue, Martinsville.

### Thursday, May 8

Public Hearing on Tax Rates and Public Hearing on Budget, 6 p.m., Council Chambers, 55 W Church St, Martinsville.

## Events

### Friday, April 25

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

Join the MHC Historical Society for a reception to celebrate our new exhibit, "Pan-tastic Journey: Cookware through time," 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the MHC Heritage Museum, 1 E Main St., Martinsville

### Saturday, April 26

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

Martinsville Half-Marathon and 5K, 8 a.m., Gazebo on Depot Street, 101 Depot St, Martinsville.

14th annual Pig Cookin' Festival, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Spencer-Penn Center, 475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer.

Oak Level Ruritan Club Community Yard Sale, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., 7668 Oak Level Road, Bassett. Spaces are \$20, vendors welcome. Concessions available. To reserve a space, call (276) 340-3158 or (276) 732-8096.

### Sunday, April 27

Bluegrass music jam, Bassett Ruritan Club, 277 Philpott Dam Road, 1:30 to 4 p.m. Musicians are welcome to bring their instruments. No admission charge. For more information call Patti or Randy at (276) 629-8296.

### Friday, May 2

Farewell Reception for Pedro Szalay 3-5

p.m., at Piedmont Arts. Szalay is retiring from Southwest Virginia Ballet at the end of June. He has served as the ballet's artistic director for more than 18 years. He has impacted the lives of many youths and adults in Martinsville-Henry County through programs like Minds in Motion, Dance Español and Dancing for the Arts. This event is free and open to the public. RSVP attendance by Wednesday, April 30 at [PiedmontArts.org](http://PiedmontArts.org). 215 Starling Ave, Martinsville.

### Saturday, May 3

Storytime at Spencer- Penn Center, Saturday, May 3rd at 10am. This monthly program will include special readers, crafts, and other fun activities. Come out and join us for this free program, fit for all ages. No registration is needed. 475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer.

First ever Veteran's Concert, 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Infinity Acres Ranch, 136 Joppa Road, #4242, Ridgeway.

Ridgeway Bee Festival, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Almond Street. Free, fun, family-friendly event; held rain or shine. Features bands, Scuffle Hill Brewery, food trucks, beekeepers, crafts, bounce house, face painting, art contest and more.

### Tuesday, May 6

Horsepasture District Meeting, 6 p.m., at Horsepasture Ruritan Building, featuring Horsepasture District Supervisor Debra Buchanan, Deputy County Administrator JR Powell, Sheriff Wayne Davis, Lisa Price-Hughes, VDOT.

## ONGOING

BINGO on Mondays, Horsepasture Volunteer Fire Department, 17815 A.L. Philpott Highway, Ridgeway. Doors open at 5 p.m., games start at 7 p.m. Concessions are available.

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

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, cof-

fee, 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 FIELDVALE 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.

The Martinsville-Henry County Democratic Committee meets on the first Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at New College Institute on Fayette Street (park on Moss St.). RSVP at [mhcdvva.org/meeting-rsvp](http://mhcdvva.org/meeting-rsvp) for Zoom link.

The Martinsville -Henry County Republican Committee meets on the 3rd Tuesday every month, 6:30 p.m., Henry County Administration Building, Summerlin Room, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.

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.

# Applications now being accepted for food assistance program

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) is accepting proposals from charitable food assistance organizations for the Virginia Agriculture Food Assistance Program (VAFAP). The state program provides grants to charitable food assistance organizations to purchase Virginia Grown agricultural products that must be distributed to food insecure Virginia residents in accordance with the food distribution guidelines for each charitable food assistance organization.

Established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2021, VAFAP compensates farmers for food products that are donated or sold to chari-

table food assistance organizations. A total of \$1.1 million in reimbursable grant funding is available for this program.

Interested charitable food assistance organizations must submit VAFAP applications by 5 p.m. on May 9, 2025. Applications should detail the plan to engage local farmers to purchase locally grown agricultural products and how the food will be distributed to persons in need.

"This type of partnership is a win-win, as it helps to address food insecurity and support local agriculture," said VDACS Commissioner Joseph Guthrie. "Producers are compensated for their crop, nutritious food is not wasted,

and additional food resources are available to charitable organizations throughout the Commonwealth."

VDACS will use a competitive review process to ensure maximum input and benefit. The review panel may also provide a recommended award amount for project proposals. VDACS will notify successful and unsuccessful grant applicants about the outcome of the competitive process as it relates to the applicant's proposal.

For more information and to apply, please visit [www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/rsfi-vafap-guidelines-Instructions.pdf](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/rsfi-vafap-guidelines-Instructions.pdf).

# Seniors can register for summer vegetable program on April 30

Registration opens April 30 for Virginia's Farm Market Fresh For Seniors (also known as the Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program) is available through the Southern Area Agency on Aging (SAAA).

Eligible seniors may receive a \$50 Benefit Shopping Card or a \$50 Digital Benefit that can be used to purchase locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables and cut herbs at participating Farmer's Markets.

The number of people who can participate is limited. Beginning on Wednesday, April 30, the SAAA will take applications over the phone and in person. The agency will also continue to take applications throughout the following week(s) while the supply of the \$50 benefit lasts.

You may qualify to participate if:  
\* you are (or will become) 60 years of age or older on or before June 1,

2025;

\*and you are a resident of Danville City, Martinsville City, Franklin County, Patrick County, Henry County or Pittsylvania County,

\*and you do not live with, and are not an immediate family member of the farmer who grows the produce,

\*and you have a gross monthly household income that does not exceed the income requirements of the program.

Those who wish to apply for the \$50 Benefit must contact the SAAA at (276) 632-6442 or toll-free at 1-800-468-4571.

Beginning April 30, and continuing as long as the supply of the \$50 benefit lasts, applicants must be prepared to certify total gross monthly household income information when applying over the phone or in person. Southern Area Agency on Aging is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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

## ★ AUCTION ★

### HUGE 2-DAY ESTATE & PERSONAL PROPERTY AUCTION

**Friday, May 2, 2025 @ 6:00 pm &**  
(Doors Open at 4:00 pm)

**Saturday, May 3, 2025 @ 10:00 am**  
(Doors Open at 8:00 am)

**CASE KNIVES, GOLD & SILVER JEWELRY, FURNITURE, DIE CAST TOYS, U.S. MINT COIN SETS, GLASSWARE, ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES**

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**KNIVES** – CASE, Buck, Old Timer, Damascus, Barlow  
**GOLD & SILVER JEWELRY** – Diamond Rings, Necklaces, Bracelets, Earrings  
**FURNITURE** – Several dining room tables & chairs, china cabinet, Drexel bedroom suite, lift chair, several NICE uph. couches, chairs, leather recliner, Bassett bedroom suite, lamps, pictures, credenza, early wood rocker, bookcases, roll-top desk with chair, end tables, oil paintings, clocks matching hand-painted iron beds, odd tables & chairs, red kitchen step stool, mirrors, lots of appliances, drop leaf table  
**MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS** – Yamaha keyboard, auto harp, dulcimers  
**ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES** – Old die cast toys, vintage telephones (red, yellow & French style), oil lamps, floor model stereo, Depression Glass, Brownie camera, punch bowls, crystal, green Fire-King batter bowl, bicycle, china, mortar & pestle, bowl & pitcher, collection of Pewter, lanterns, Moss Rose child's tea set, collectible sea shells, white milk glass, cast iron fry pans  
**HOUSEHOLD** – Paper shredders, television, microwave, crock pot, waffle maker, pots & pans, cassette player, sewing machine, refrigerator



**TERMS** - Cash or approved check with proper ID. No warranties expressed or implied. All announcements made day of sale take precedence over all previous statements, written or verbal, concerning this auction. All items sold "as-is-where-is". 10% Buyer's Premium applies. Concessions available on site.

**TOO MANY ITEMS TO LIST!!**  
★ ⇨ DIRECTIONS ⇩ ★

**FROM MARTINSVILLE, VA** - Take Hwy 58W, go 7 miles, Horsepasture Fire Dept. on left at corner of 58W & Rt. 687 (Soapstone Road). **WATCH FOR SIGNS**  
**FROM STUART, VA** - Take Hwy 58E into Henry County, turn right on Rt. 687 (Soapstone Road), 1st road to right just past Old Country Store & Hillcrest Baptist Church. **LOOK FOR SIGNS**

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# OPINION

## Regarding Kilmar Abrego Garcia

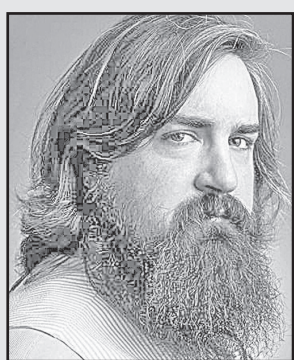
When I started my journalism career in 2012, one of the first things that editor Ginny Wray impressed upon me was the importance of the word “allegedly.”

For example, let's say a woman murders her husband. The murder takes place in the front yard of their home and a neighbor across the street captures the entire incident on a 4K video recording. Also, the woman is wearing a T-shirt that says “I murdered my husband in cold blood and all I got was this lousy T-shirt.” The woman is arrested and sent to jail to await trial.

When you're writing the news story about the incident, you don't call the woman a “murderer” under any circumstances, even if you have no doubt that she committed the crime. Instead, you call her “the alleged murderer.” You might also say she's “suspected” or “accused” of murder.

The reason for this is the presumption of innocence, which the Supreme Court has ruled is one of the most basic requirements of a fair trial. A defendant in a trial is presumed innocent until the prosecutor has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant has committed the crime.

The presumption of innocence is deeply linked to the Due Process Clause which can be found in the Fifth and 14th Amendments. The clause states that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. This is a concept that's been well established since the Magna Carta. The Supreme Court has also ruled that the right to due process applies to citizens and non-citizens alike as long as they're in the United



By Ben R. Williams

States.

All of which brings us to Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a man you've probably heard about in the news just lately.

Garcia, 29, has lived in the United States for the last 14 years. He works construction, is married, and helps raise three children with disabilities.

The Trump administration deported Garcia to El Salvador's notorious Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo (CECOT), one of the largest prisons in the world and one of the worst. The basis for the deportation was that Maryland police identified Garcia as a member of the MS-13 gang. Garcia denies the claim and has yet to be charged with a crime.

A U.S. immigration judge tried to block Garcia from being sent to CECOT, but the Trump administration sent him anyway. The Supreme Court ordered Garcia's return, but the Trump administration has refused to act, claiming that Garcia was sent to CECOT in error but regardless, he really is a member of MS-13.

Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen, one of the few remaining politicians who's willing to put his money where his mouth is, flew to El Salvador last week and met with Garcia and he's working to have Garcia returned to the U.S.

The White House has doubled down on claims that Garcia is a member of MS-

13 and some kind of monstrous gang-banger and human trafficker, while his defenders point out that he's never been convicted of a crime.

While I'm certain Garcia's character will continue to be litigated in the public eye for some time to come, to do so is to miss the point.

Even if it were revealed that Garcia is a member of MS-13 who has taken lives, kicked puppies, and routinely cheated at Monopoly, it doesn't change the fact that his right to due process is clearly laid out in the Constitution.

“But he's here illegally!”

It doesn't matter. He has the right to due process.

“But he's a gang-banger!”

Even if he is, he has the right to due process.

“Did the folks who visited the Capitol on January 6 get the right to due process?”

They did in fact, that's why we had all those trials and they weren't just disappeared to a Central American prison and quietly killed.

However you feel about Kilmar Abrego Garcia, this is about something much bigger than one man. If the Trump Administration denies the right to due process to one person in defiance of an order from the Supreme Court, the ramifications extend far beyond that person.

As Sen. Van Hollen said this past Sunday on Fox News, “My whole point here is if you deprive one man of his Constitutional rights, you threaten the Constitutional rights of everybody. ... If you threaten the rule of law for one person, you threaten it for everybody.”

If the President were to ignore an order from the United States Supreme Court and continue denying someone the rights guaranteed to them by our Constitution, it would be a rejection of the rule of law bordering on treason.

Allegedly, anyway.

~Sponsored  
Content~

# Pope Francis Didn't Miss His Opportunity

Dr. Glenn Mollette

Pope Francis' complete name was Jorge Mario Bergoglio. He was born in 1936. He served as Pope for 12 years, from March 13, 2013, until his passing on April 21, 2025. He was elected on the second day of the 2013 papal conclave and chose his papal name in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi. During the recent Holy week all the way through Easter. He was doing what he loved to do, serve God and help others. Even on his last day he was doing what he could for God and others. What an amazing legacy. He will be remembered for doing all he could, when he could.

There is a story in the Bible about a woman named Mary who anointed Jesus with an expensive fragrance. Her name was Mary and she had a brother named Lazarus whom Jesus brought back to life after being dead for four days.

They had a get-together to celebrate Lazarus' second chance at life and her sister Martha prepared the meal. A short time later Jesus would be arrested, put through a mock trial and crucified. After three days he would overcome death and leave the tomb. Women would gather to anoint Jesus on that Sunday but would be met by an angel who would announce, “He is not here, he is risen.” The women would not have the opportunity to anoint Jesus. He was gone.

Back to Mary, Martha and Lazarus. If Mary had not anointed Jesus when she did, Jesus would never have been anointed. He actually said, “She has anointed my body for the burial.” Jesus knew what was coming. Mary had a special sensitivity about her that caused her to react in a special way. She knew she needed to act immediately and anoint Jesus while he was

at the table eating because it might be her only opportunity, and it was.

Mary will be grateful down throughout eternity that she didn't delay doing something very special for Jesus.

We can learn something from Mary. When we have an impression to say a kind word or do a good deed we should do so. So often we never know when seeing someone might be the only or the last time, we will see them. Expressing a kind word, an affirmation, a compliment or however you might want to anoint the person would be a good thing to do. So often we miss our brief opportunities to demonstrate kindness, appreciation and love.

This is appropriate at all levels of life. We are never too big, too great or too important to say thank you or offer kind words to others.

Jesus was all powerful. He was God in the flesh. He could do anything. But what did he do? He laid aside his outer garment, girded himself with a towel and washed the feet of his disciples. Our Lord of all, was a servant of all even unto his death on the cross.

We live in a world of ill words, deeds, rudeness and evil. It's all around us. The worst thing we can do is to become like those who act this way. It's not always easy to rise above. If I had been Jesus, I'm sure I would have commanded the ground to open up and for the fires of hell to have consumed the mob that put me on the cross. That's why he was able to do what he did for us. He was without sin but bore our sins on the cross.

If we can, let's do what we can, while we can. Just one life will not forever last, our opportunities soon will pass.

Pope Francis surely knew his time was close at hand and wanted to use his time doing what he felt God had appointed him to do.

## Letter To The Editor

Pope Francis

Well, the Pope is dead, and people who hated his guts days ago are now praying for him. I've never understood praying for a dead person: their fate is now set. What's to pray about? Shouldn't they have prayed for him while he was alive? Do we pray that a person repents while they are alive, or do we pray God be merciful once they are dead? Perhaps both.

Religion makes for a very odd community. Now, I'm a Christian, but I recognize the common contradictions seen by skeptics. There are Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and “Christians.” However, inside of the term Christian there are Romans Papists, Protestants, and then groups that the other two mutually reject: Mormons, Sabbatarians, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Back in the 60s folks just would not have a Roman Papist as President, but that's exactly what they got with JFK. Southerners are vastly ignorant of their own past, not realizing that the KKK was not just anti-negro and anti-Jew, but also anti-Catholic!

Roman Papists call their priests, “Father,” even though that goes against Jesus' teaching in Matthew 23:9. Romans Papists command their priests to live unmarried, though that goes against the Apostle Paul in 1Timothy 4:3. Roman Papists either pray TO or THROUGH Mother Mary, but neither idea is taught in the New Testament. Roman Papists “baptize” their babies, a practice nowhere found in the New Testament, and they only baptize their babies because they believe in Augustine's theory of inherited depravity from Adam. Again, an idea not taught

in the New Testament.

Long robes, praying in Latin, lots of murals, smoke and bells, transubstantiation, altar boys and sex scandal. I'm not a Romanist, but I am a Christian.

All of the above was doctrine or, possibly even labeled, speculation. I do want to say this though – in the ongoing war between Catholics and Protestants I have known Catholics that BEHAVE just as well as Protestants, if not better.

Catholics, historically, put a high value on marriage. Divorce is massively looked down upon, as it should be. However, they created a category that God never sanctioned: annulments. Having sex after a marriage is not what consummates a marriage. Once two people vow their covenant they are joined by God with or without intercourse.

Catholics, historically, put a high value on human life. Abortions, again, are massively looked down on, as they should be. Even the idea of preventing conception is discouraged! I'm not a Romanist, but I'm a Christian, and I love my children.

People will say about religious folks that we have more in common than not. Well, in many ways that just might be true. However, I see our existing commonalities as reason to rid ourselves of our disagreements in an attempt to reach more commonality, more unity!

If you are religious and have unbiblical religious traditions that cause division between you and a fellow believer, why not give up those traditions? We say unity is important, but we act quite differently.

Caleb Robertson,  
Martinsville

# Trooper's vehicle struck in crash; driver charged

The Virginia State Police are investigating a two-vehicle crash that involved a patrol vehicle assisting a disabled motorist on Sunday night in Henry County.

The crash occurred at 9:05 p.m. on April 20 on U.S. 220, approximately two-tenths of a mile south of Virginia 609.

According to state police, the patrol vehicle was stopped in the right southbound travel lane with its emergency lights activated when it was struck from behind by a 2013 Toyota Highlander traveling in the same lane.

The trooper was outside the vehicle assist-

ing a disabled motorist at the time of the crash.

The driver of the Toyota, William J. Likins, 58, of Oakland, Maryland, was wearing a seatbelt. He sustained injuries and was transported to a nearby hospital.

Both the trooper and the driver of the disabled vehicle received minor injuries after diving over the guardrail to avoid being struck by the vehicles.

Likins was charged with reckless driving in connection with the incident.

The crash remains under investigation.

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Debbie Hall - dhall@theenterprise.net

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Wendi Craig - advertize@mainstreetnewspapers.com

(276) 340-2445

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Letters must be signed and have a telephone number where you can be reached to be considered for publication. All letters will be verified before publication. The Henry County Enterprise reserves the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length, content and style.

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

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DHALL@THEENTERPRISE.NET

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
CITY OF MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA  
NOTICE OF PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE**

Pursuant to Section 58.1-3321 of the Code of Virginia, notice is hereby given that a public hearing is scheduled for 6:00 P.M. May 8, 2025 on the proposed Tax Rates for Fiscal Year 2025-26. Interested parties are invited to attend the public hearing and present their views. The hearing will be held in the Council Chambers located at 55 W. Church Street, Second Floor.

**The City of Martinsville proposes to increase property tax levies.**

1. Assessment Increase: Total assessed value of real property, excluding additional assessments due to new construction or improvements to property, exceeds last year's total assessed value of real property by 37.28 percent.
2. Lowered Rate Necessary to Offset Increased Assessment: The tax rate which would levy the same amount of real estate tax as last year, when multiplied by the new total assessed value of real estate with the exclusions mentioned above, would be \$.7212 per \$100 of assessed value. This rate will be known as the "lowered tax rate."
3. Effective Rate Increase: The City of Martinsville proposes to adopt a tax rate of \$.7792 per \$100 of assessed value. The difference between the lowered tax rate and the proposed rate would be \$.0580 per \$100, or .8.5% percent. This difference will be known as the "effective tax rate increase." Individual property taxes may, however, increase at a percentage greater than or less than the above percentage.
4. Proposed Total Budget Increase: Based on the proposed real property tax rate and changes in other revenues, the total budget of the City of Martinsville will exceed last year's by 7.4 percent. A copy of the proposed budget document is available for review in the City Manager's office, and on the City's website at <https://www.martinsville-va.gov/612/Proposed-FY-2025-26-Budget>.

**BY THE ORDER OF MARTINSVILLE CITY COUNCIL**

**Sports Schedule**

The following are the dates and times of local high school teams and their games for the week of April 28 - May 3:

4/28	4:30pm	Girls Tennis	Bassett at George Washington
	4:30pm	Boys Tennis	George Washington at Bassett
	5pm	Baseball	George Washington at Bassett
	5pm	Softball	George Washington at Bassett
	5pm	Softball	Magna Vista at Floyd County
	5:30pm	Baseball	Martinsville at Mecklenburg County
	6pm	Girls Soccer	Mecklenburg County at Martinsville
4/29	7pm	Girls Soccer	Bassett at George Washington
	7pm	Boys Soccer	G. Washington at Bassett (Smith River Complex)
	7pm	Boys Soccer	Martinsville at Mecklenburg County
	4:30pm	Girls Tennis	George Washington at Martinsville
	4:30pm	Boys Soccer	Martinsville at George Washington
	4:30pm	Boys Tennis	Carlisle at Eastern Mennonite
	4:30pm	Boys Soccer	Hidden Valley at Bassett
4/30	4:30pm	Baseball	Carlisle at Temple Christian
	5pm	Girls Tennis	Magna Vista at Halifax County
	5pm	Boys Soccer	Halifax County at Magna Vista
	5:30pm	Softball	Bassett at Dan River
	6pm	Girls Soccer	Carlisle at SVA
	4:30pm	Boys Tennis	Carlisle at Hargrave Military Academy
	5pm	Baseball	Bassett at Floyd County
5/1	5pm	Baseball	Halifax County at Magna Vista
	5pm	Softball	Magna Vista at Halifax County
	5:30pm	Baseball	Martinsville at Tunstall
	6pm	Girls Soccer	Tunstall at Martinsville
	6pm	Boys Track	Bassett at William Byrd
	6:30pm	Girls Soccer	Halifax County at Magna Vista (Smith River Complex)
	7pm	Boys Soccer	Magna Vista at Halifax County
5/2	7pm	Boys Soccer	Martinsville at Tunstall
	4:30pm	Girls Tennis	Bassett at Martinsville
	4:30pm	Boys Tennis	Martinsville at Bassett
	4:30pm	Boys Tennis	The Covenant at Carlisle
	4:30pm	Girls Soccer	Carlisle at Eastern Mennonite
	5pm	Track	Bassett at Tunstall
	5pm	Track	Magna Vista at Tunstall
5/2	5pm	Softball	Bassett at Floyd County
	6pm	Baseball	G. Washington at Martinsville (Hooker Field)
	6pm	Baseball	Carlisle at Caldwell Academy
	7pm	Girls Soccer	Martinsville at George Washington
	7pm	Boys Soccer	George Washington at Martinsville
	5pm	Baseball	Magna Vista at Bassett
	5pm	Softball	Magna Vista at Bassett
7pm	Girls Soccer	Magna Vista vs Bassett (Smith River Complex)	
7pm	Boys Soccer	Magna Vista vs Bassett (Smith River Complex)	

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



**Henry County  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY PRIMARY ELECTION  
Tuesday, June 17, 2025**



**THIS IS A DEMOCRATIC PARTY PRIMARY ELECTION  
FOR:  
Lieutenant Governor  
Attorney General**

REPUBLICAN PRIMARY CANCELLED

**SAMPLE BALLOTS ARE AVAILABLE**

AN APPROPRIATE ID IS REQUIRED TO VOTE AT THE POLLS

Please verify your voter registration, polling place, and VALID ID before voting!  
[vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation](http://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation)

**POLLS OPEN 6 a.m. - 7 p.m.**

**Tuesday May 27, 2025:** Last day to register to vote or change your voter registration information for this election.

Mailed voter registration applications must be sent to the Henry County Voter Registration and Elections Office postmarked on or before the deadline.

**IN-PERSON ABSENTEE (EARLY) VOTING**

Henry County Registrar's Office  
located at the Henry County Administration Building  
3300 Kings Mountain Road Martinsville, Virginia 24112  
**Monday – Friday May 2-June 13, 2025: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**  
**Saturdays, June 7 & 14, 2025: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, June 14, 2025:** Last day to vote an In-Person (early) Absentee Ballot at the Henry County Registrar's Office

**MAIL ABSENTEE VOTING**

Request an Absentee ballot application: [vote@henrycountyva.gov](mailto:vote@henrycountyva.gov)  
Absentee ballots ARE counted

**Friday, June 6, 2025:** Last day to request an absentee ballot by mail.  
Applications must be received in the Registrar's Office by 5 p.m.

**Tuesday, June 17, 2025: Election Day** ALL DROPPED OFF Absentee voted ballots must be returned to the Registrar's Office by 7 p.m. (Virginia/Eastern Standard Time) to be counted.

**Friday March 8, 2024:** ALL Absentee voted ballots that are returned via mail must be post marked on or before election day and received in the Registrar's Office by NOON (Virginia time) to be counted.

**BALLOT DROP OFF STATIONS**

Monday – Friday, May 2-June 13, 2025: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Saturdays, June 14, 2025: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**Henry County Registrar & Elections Office**

Henry County Administration Building  
3300 Kings Mountain Road #103 Martinsville, Virginia 24112

**On Election Day Only: All polling places and the Henry County Registrar's Office**

**Dawn Stultz-Vaughn, Director of Elections & General Registrar**

3300 KINGS MOUNTAIN ROAD #103 MARTINSVILLE, VIRGINIA 24112  
TELEPHONE: 276-634-4698 FAX: 276-632-8278

Email: [vote@henrycountyva.gov](mailto:vote@henrycountyva.gov)  
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*Horsepasture District Supervisor*  
&  
JR Powell, Deputy County Administrator

Sheriff Wayne Davis  
*Sheriff's Office*

Lisa Hughes  
*VDOT Resident Engineer*



**Tuesday, May 6, 2025  
Horsepasture Ruritan Building  
6:00-7:30 pm**

# CLASSIFIED

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

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# LEGAL

## COUNTY OF HENRY REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings have been scheduled for **May 14, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following these public hearings, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the applications to the Board of Supervisors. The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct public hearings on the following applications on **May 27, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. The purpose of these public hearings is to receive input into the possible rezoning of property. Following are the specifics of the public hearings.

**Case R-25-06 Steve R. Martin; Steve Martin's Family Properties, LLC**  
The property is located at 3119 Stones Dairy Rd, in the Blackberry District. The property is shown on Tax Map 26.7/97F, 26.7(11)/97R and part of 26.7(11)/A. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 8-acres from Agricultural District A-1 and Commercial District B-1 to Limited Industrial District I-2. The applicant wishes to add approximately 2 acres to the existing property, add an equipment shed, and bring the remainder of the property into conformity with current zoning.

**Case R-25-07 McArthur Lee**  
The property is located at 1690 Crestview Dr, in the Blackberry District. The property is shown on Tax Map 14.8/158,159,160. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 6-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to construct a barn and to keep agricultural animals.

**Case R-25-08 Luke Aaron Kanode**  
The property is located at 334 Centerville Rd, in the Iriswood District. The property is shown on Tax Map 56.4/15R. The applicant wishes to construct additional accessory buildings, operate a home occupation under the proposed zoning, and to keep agricultural animals.

**Case R-25-09 William B. Wimmer**  
The property is located on the north east side of Stones Dairy Rd, directly across from the intersection of Morningside Dr, in the Blackberry District. The property is shown on Tax Map 25.8/235. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 1.483-acres from Mixed Residential District M-R to Rural Residential District R-R. The applicant wishes to place a manufactured home on the property. The applications for these requests may be viewed in the Department of Planning, Zoning & Inspection between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Lee H. Clark, AICP Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

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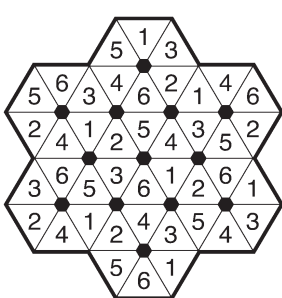
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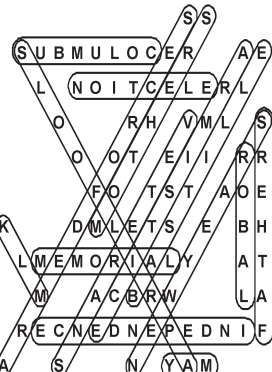
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B R U T E A N D R A N C H I A M B  
A S B E S T O S J E N A N D B A R R I E  
A V E R S E T O A V E R Y B R U I N S  
S P R Y S E X B E T M E A R E N A S

## DAY : OBSERVANCES



## SCRAMBLERS

solution

- Project
- Garish;
- Intake;
- Throne

Today's Word

## SPARRING

**FEAR & KNIGHT**  
answer

B I P E D  
E U E  
R A I N E D  
O R G A N P  
U G P C  
R O O T R A G E  
A O  
G I B  
E

## Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

# Join Our Team as a Freelance Reporter!

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- Cover local events, breaking news, and human interest stories
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- Strong writing, editing, and communication skills
- Ability to work independently and manage time effectively
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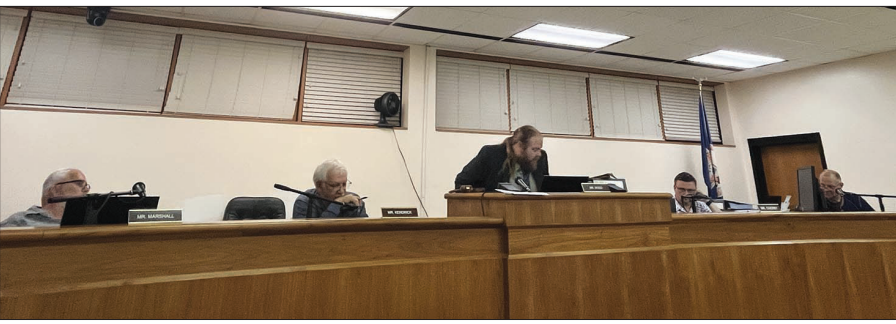
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# Crossing the Lines

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

### Input sought on proposed hikes to personal property taxes



The Patrick County Board of Supervisors at a recent meeting.

One of the public hearings scheduled for the Monday, April 28 meeting of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors is to gather public input on a proposal to increase personal property taxes by up to 16 cents each year for a three-year period. This would bring the personal property tax rate to \$2.20 in three years.

The motion was made by Steve Marshall, of the Blue Ridge District, and seconded by Doug Perry, of the Smith River District. It passed in a 3-2 vote. Marshall, Perry, and Jonathan Wood, chairman and of the Peters Creek District, voted in favor. Andrew Overby, vice chairman and of the Dan River District, and Clayton Kendrick, of the Mayo River District, voted against.

With a \$197,336 deficit still remaining in the budget, the board plans to use reserve funds to balance it.

"That's what it's there for," Marshall said. "Also, our personal property tax is—we got to increase that. There's no way around it, it's been at that price for many, many years. Inflation has not stopped, and if the amount you're collecting stays at one price and your inflation continues at the rate it's been going over the last 15 years or so since that's changed, that's revenue erosion. You think you're getting that amount of revenue, but you're really not cause of the inflation," he said.

Marshall said he believes the county has either the lowest or second lowest personal property tax rate in the region. He believes the county should instead fall somewhere in the middle, based on a regional median tax rate.

"If we could average what that median is, and that median would be a fair price for taxes, and then phase

that in over a three-year period and then after that index that into the" Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), "which is a tool that measures inflation. And you index it to that and it gives you your automatic increases with inflation," he said.

Kendrick said he wouldn't agree to increasing the personal property tax without an argument.

"You may not increase the rate in 10 years, but everything you go to buy has went up," he said, adding the machine and tools tax is placed on businesses.

One of the other two public hearings is related to a proposed two-percent increase in the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), with the additional revenue earmarked for fire departments and rescue squads.

The public hearing to raise the TOT from five percent to seven percent was approved in a 4-1 vote. Marshall cast the dissenting vote.

According to the Virginia Legislative Information System (LIS) website, any county, by duly adopted ordinance, "may levy a transient occupancy tax on hotels, motels, boarding houses, travel campgrounds, and other facilities offering guest rooms rented out for continuous occupancy for fewer than 30 days."

"The tax shall be imposed on the total price paid by the customer for the use or possession of the room or space occupied in a retail space," the LIS website states.

The final hearing—to consider approval of the FY 2025–2026 budget—was approved unanimously in a 5-0 vote.

### Board takes steps to terminate solar agreement, approves adjustments at Transfer Station

The Patrick County Board of Supervisors approved adjustments to the Transfer Station and took steps to terminate a proposed solar project at its Monday, April 14 meeting.

The board directed the county attorney to proceed with a formal letter to terminate the Fairy Stone Solar project, an estimated 170-acre solar project on Commerce Street in Stuart.

The project was canceled last year when it was considered no longer viable due to interconnection issues.

Fairy Stone LLC, a subsidiary of Energix Renewables, was deemed to have a fatal flaw in its connection to the grid, Energix Vice-President of Development Seth Christman said at the time.

"Unfortunately, the project would have triggered an unacceptable voltage change where it interconnected to the Stuart substation," he said.

The board had approved a siting agreement for the project in a hotly debated 3-2 vote at its March 11, 2024, meeting.

Transfer Station adjustments at the Transfer Station were based on recommendations by Transfer Station Manager Scottie Hylton, and center around adjusting the tipping fee and tire disposal fee, eliminating the line item in general cleanup, and interest charged on nonpayments.



Transfer Station Manager Scottie Hylton spoke about the four recommendations proposed at the April 14 meeting.

Beginning July 1, Hylton said Republic Services, the current solid waste contract, will implement its annual five percent raise.

As the current cost is \$64.19 per ton, the new rate is expected to be \$67.39 per ton. Hylton said the county currently charges \$65 per ton.

"If we leave it the way it is now, it'll be a loss of \$2.39 per ton. To offset this deficit and provide a more sustainable margin we propose increasing the tipping fee to \$69.29 cents per ton. This change results in a positive margin of \$1.86 per ton," he said.

### Bowling honored with Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy



Darrell Bowling (third from left) was honored with the Chancellor's Philanthropy Award.

Darrell Bowling, of Stuart, received the 19th Annual Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy. He was nominated for the award by Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC).

Hosted by the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education (VFCCE), more than two dozen individuals, families, and organizations were honored with the Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy. The awards were presented at a luncheon ceremony in Richmond on Tuesday, April 15.

VCCS Chancellor Dr. David Doré served as the emcee, and Mr. Mark Hourigan, founder and CEO of Hourigan, delivered the keynote address.

"Every time our donors support a scholarship, fund a new program, or an emergency grant, they are not just giving back, they are lifting up," said Hourigan. "They are invaluable partners whose generosity can and does make the difference between a student dropping out or staying the course and realizing their true potential."

### School board approves \$1.2 million in projects despite budget hit



The school board recognized Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) Regional Art contest winner Midori Waycaster.

The Patrick County School Board approved updates totaling \$1.2 million using one-percent sales tax funds, even as it learned the division is expected to lose \$667,228 in funding.

At its Thursday, April 10 meeting, the board voted 4-1 to approve several projects for Fiscal Year 2025. Walter Scott, of the Smith River District, cast the only dissenting vote.

Schools Superintendent Jason Wood said the projects are made possible by the one-percent sales tax approved by county residents.

"We're so thankful that our county approved that so we could make some much-needed upgrades to things that have been neglected over

the past," he said.

Among the approved projects: \$526,557.50 will cover the remaining cost of renovations at Blue Ridge Elementary School.

\$680,000 will go toward paving and resurfacing the Patrick County High School (PCHS) track with a rubberized surface.

\$280,000 is allocated for replacing light poles at the PCHS baseball field.

Fixing drainage issues at the PCHS softball field.

\$230,000 in end-of-year funds will be used to apply epoxy coating over tile flooring at Patrick Springs Primary School, instead of replacing the tile.

### High Strung to Headline Saturday's PCMA Show



High Strung will headline the Patrick County Music Association (PCMA) show on Saturday, April 26.

High Strung will headline the Patrick County Music Association (PCMA) show on Saturday, April 26, at the Rotary Building in Stuart.

Doors open at 5 p.m., with music starting at 6 p.m.

Concessions will be available for

purchase from the Patrick County Shooting Education Team, with proceeds supporting firearm safety education for local youth.

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



# PUZZLE TIME



## FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

ORU  
GAGTRA  
ORBEP  
♥EBNA  
ANIDER  
♥GBI  
TORO  
♥RANGO  
UPN  
♥CUDDEE  
IDBEP  
♥ERGA

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. Eyes are different. 2. Hat is larger. 3. Label is different. 4. Door is not as wide. 5. Name on door is lower. 6. Tie is thinner.

## MAGIC MAZE

— DAY : OBSERVANCES

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: CELEBRATION OF OLD GLORY

- April Fools' Armistice Bastille
- Columbus Election Father's Independence
- Labor May Memorial MLK
- Mother's New Year's Veterans

## Super Crossword RE-SOUNDING DUOS

**ACROSS**

- 1 Gour-d-shaped rattle
- 7 Cognizant
- 12 — mo replay
- 15 Alaskan island
- 19 Greeting in Apple ads
- 20 Gourmet mushroom
- 21 Paddle-propelled surfboards
- 23 BOX + BISCUITS
- 25 Family of writer
- Ralph Waldo
- 26 Main character on "Saved by the Bell"
- 27 MARRY + WIDER
- 29 Yearned (for)
- 32 — Jima
- 34 Basil-based sauces
- 35 SHANTY + OWNERS
- 40 Suds maker
- 44 Golf bag peg
- 45 That, in Peru
- 46 Grain staple
- 47 Winnie-the-Pooh creator
- 50 Fix the spine of, as a book
- 53 CLONK + BUNGLE
- 57 "Rashomon" director
- Kurosawa
- 58 Rate — (be judged as perfect)
- 59 Vamooses
- 60 Annoy
- 61 CLEANSER + SCOW
- 64 Norway's biggest city
- 65 Positive votes
- 66 Je ne sais —
- 67 Finish
- 69 Prime draft status
- 71 Prefix with sphere
- 74 Radiance
- 77 PIGGY + CONCH
- 83 Siouan tribe
- 84 Successor of mono
- 86 — Reader (magazine)
- 87 Fool in the opera
- "Pagliacci"
- 88 SWAT + SCOURGE
- 91 Gives a lift to
- 92 Ancestry
- 93 Punk/folk singer
- DiFranco
- 94 Hamm of soccer
- 96 Bar "rocks"
- 97 Flimflam
- 98 OFFICIATED + IGNITE
- 103 Hammy actor
- 107 Turn — dime
- 108 Prenatal test, informally
- 109 BARBARIAN + FARM
- 115 Poetic foot
- 117 Fire-resistant material
- 118 ANISTON + J.M.
- 123 Repelled by
- 124 Animator Tex
- 125 Boston hockey team
- 126 Nimble
- 127 Survey info
- 128 "Let's wager on that"
- 129 Game venues
- DOWN**
- 1 1997 sci-fi spoof, briefly
- 2 Pal, in Paris
- 3 Sprinted
- 4 Bowled over
- 5 Quebec's home
- 6 "Ride On" rock band
- 7 "Better Call Saul" channel
- 8 "Yippee!"
- 9 Duncan of Obama's Cabinet
- 10 Wetland plant
- 11 Snow queen in "Frozen"
- 12 Stockholm citizens
- 13 Ovine babies
- 14 Plain to see
- 15 Booth or Oswald, notably
- 16 Defeated by decision in boxing, for short
- 17 Fork point
- 18 World power until '91
- 22 Slangy ending for switch
- 24 Slips on sleet, say
- 28 "Weekend Edition" aier
- 29 Of the stars
- 30 Insolently bold
- 31 — jeebies
- 33 "— Man" (1994 hit for Salt-N-Pepa with En Vogue)
- 36 Flanders on "The Simpsons"
- 37 Recline lazily
- 38 Pops
- 39 LAX guesses
- 41 Song from the '50s, e.g.
- 42 "It's the end of —"
- 43 Big wheel's benefits
- 47 Rock-clinging mollusk
- 48 Praline nut
- 49 Followers of lambdas
- 51 Baghdad citizen
- 52 Half of Mork's "Bye!"
- 54 That woman
- 55 Sgt., e.g.
- 56 "ER" figures
- 58 Texas or Kansas city
- 62 Pooch's ID
- 63 Suffix with depend
- 65 "Yippee!"
- 68 Hip-hop dance of the 2010s
- 70 This, in Peru
- 71 Copies a wolf
- 72 Moral tenet
- 73 2016 Disney film
- 75 No. like "first" or "third"
- 76 Spider snare
- 78 Suffix of 75-Down numbers
- 79 2015 Marvel film
- 80 Naval officer
- 81 Chinese nut
- 82 Be beaten by
- 84 Jamaican pop music
- 85 Snowman in "Frozen"
- 89 Gravesite site
- 90 Having one flat, musically
- 91 Nasty
- 95 Grant — (financial subsidy)
- 98 Yankees' rival
- 99 Fumble
- 100 Cause injury
- 101 Actress Hedy
- 102 Stain or soak
- 104 Jumble
- 105 Writer Joyce Carol —
- 106 Govt. bond
- 109 Sheep cries
- 110 Abbr. on an invitation
- 111 Rival of Lyft
- 112 Take — at (criticize sarcastically)
- 113 Actress Campbell
- 114 News site for techies
- 116 "Dancing Queen" group
- 119 "Science Guy" Bill
- 120 — Tin Tin
- 121 Stuck — rut
- 122 Suffix with lion

## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- Over the course of her 63-year reign, Britain's Queen Victoria survived no fewer than eight assassination attempts.
- Like humans, male kangaroos flex their biceps to impress females.
- The word "sock" comes from the Latin word "soccus" — a loose-fitting slipper worn by Roman comic actors.
- In Europe, nickel is banned in all alloys for widespread allergy reasons.
- Studies have suggested that gifted people often have bad handwriting because their brains work faster than their hands.
- The New York Times predicted that humans wouldn't be able to fly for at least a million years ... in 1903, the same year as the Wright brothers' first manned flight.
- Alexandre Dumas used a particular shade of blue paper on which to write his fiction. For poetry, he used yellow paper, and his articles were penned on pink paper. Once, he ran out of blue paper and had to use a cream-colored pad instead, which he believed had a negative impact on that work of fiction.
- The first American alarm clock was invented in Concord, New Hampshire, in 1787 by Levi Hutchins. It was never patented and rang only at one time, 4 a.m., to rouse him for work.
- Raspberries are a member of the rose family.
- Despite creating some of the most legendary guitars in the world, Leo Fender, the founder of Fender, Music Man and G&L Guitars, couldn't actually play the instrument.
- The pressure in a champagne bottle is three times higher than that of a car tire.
- When in danger, a hairy frog will break its own bones in order to create claws that it pushes through its skin to scratch a predator.

\*\*\*

**Thought for the Day:** "The service you do for others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth." — Muhammad Ali

## Weekly SUDOKU

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

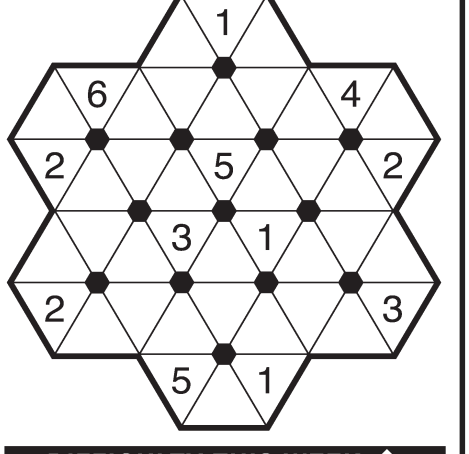
- ♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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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

**M**AKE A MAXIMUM EFFORT TO MATCH ALL OF YOUR CLUBS TO YOUR GAME BUT PARTICULARLY THOSE YOU USE THE MOST — THE DRIVER, WEDGE, AND PUTTER.

TAKE SPECIAL CARE OF THOSE CLUBS ONCE YOU'VE FOUND THE ONES THAT WORK BEST FOR YOU. MANY TOUR PROS ARE SO ATTACHED TO THESE KEY SCORING CLUBS THAT THEY HATE TO EVEN LET THEM OUT OF THEIR SIGHT.



"I owe it all to Elsa, my wife and partner."

## 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!

Task

JETCROP

Guady

RIGSHA

Profit

INKTEA

Chair

HORNET

TODAY'S WORD

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# Reversion

(cont. from page 1)

proved.”

Other council members were not involved in the request, according to Jones.

“It’s not a council initiative; nobody else talked about it,” he said, “and I’m not talking about it to push it. I’m just saying, ‘Hey, the conversation is coming up. I feel that I can better defend it if we’ve had a study.’”

Jones acknowledged residents’ concerns but said some form of consolidation could be a consideration.

“I still feel like overall the majority of citizens in the city don’t want reversion. I think everybody would be willing to probably look at some sort of consolidation, whatever that might look like,” he said.

Jones, who was among the candidates in the 2022 election to previously run on a platform opposing reversion, added that the study would only move forward if a college conducted a study for free.

“I think that it’s fair and it shows transparency on the city’s behalf to just have (the) study done, you know, the same way we have all these other steps done. It’s not to say that we would go in that direction or not. I certainly don’t want to, but I think it’s a worthwhile study, especially if we could get a college or someone to do it for free.”

In a Monday interview, Jones said Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson had not been informed.

“I’ll get a chance to meet with the vice mayor this week and I’ll let her know,” he said, again noting that a study had not yet begun. “It hasn’t even started yet. It’s just, we asked for it from the city manager.”

Lawson confirmed Monday that she was unaware of the possible reversion study.

“There’s been no discussion by council about engaging a reversion study, so I’m completely unaware of any discussion. Reversion was killed by a majority of council in January of 2023 after the first study was completed,” she said.

She also noted that studies are “very pricey” and that the results of previous studies are available on the city’s website.

At the council meeting Tuesday, she vehemently stated, “We are not doing a reversion study.”

Council member Aaron Rawls expressed strong opposition to the idea, calling a study a “silly idea and a disservice to our citizens that we are spending so much as a dime on it.”

Council member Rayshaun Gravely, while not a fan of reversion, said the city needs to “keep its options open for the future.”

Council member Julian Mei said he had not been informed of the study and found it unusual that it wasn’t brought up in any council meeting.

“It’s not just a question of someone snapping their fingers in Martinsville anymore and saying, ‘I think we should revert so let’s start spending a bunch of money on it,’” Mei said.

While not completely opposed to the idea, Mei said strong data would be needed to prove reversion is in the city’s best interest.

“I’m not completely against anything. I like data points to be presented to me properly current, as of the time of the point of concern,” he said, adding that he didn’t “agree with how it was presented” in the past.

Both Jones and Mei indicated the city’s finances appear stable.

“From weekly, monthly budget updates, from everything I’ve seen, finances look good,” said Jones.

“Regarding our finances, to the best of my knowledge I’m not seeing anything on my end that’s concrete and makes me think the city is in trouble,” said Mei.

Rawls, however, raised concerns that the city’s financial health could be undermined by internal conflict.

“Something has gone awry with some of the bad behavior of people at city hall, and missed opportunities. Reversion doesn’t solve any financial issues for us anyway, so I certainly wouldn’t consider reversion on the radar of viable solutions,” he said.

At Tuesday’s work session, neither reversion nor consolidation was discussed, with members of the council hearing updates on the electric department and options for relocating services and employees currently housed in the municipal building.

“We’ve exceeded the useful life of this building,” said Eric Payne, director of Community Development.

An air quality study revealed elevated particle levels, though not in the basement where some offices are located. Measures are being taken to improve conditions.

Relocation plans span five to seven years, with some employees expected to move sooner. Temporary locations include the Clocktower, modular trailers, and Patrick Henry Mall. Long-term solutions may involve the former BB&T building or other options.

Further planning is underway, and any court relocation would require a public referendum.

## Part II: County leaders say process still puts county at disadvantage

Several Henry County officials expressed surprise and skepticism after learning that a Martinsville City Council member had requested a reversion study — an idea that has stirred controversy in recent years.

Henry County Administrator Dale Wagoner said he had not been made aware of a new study, but emphasized that previous studies are already available.

“We’ve been through this before,” Wagoner said. “Reversion is not set up to be advantageous to the county. State law automatically puts counties at a disadvantage. That’s why county residents have no desire for the city to revert.”

Wagoner said that unless the state changes the law to make the process more equitable, counties will continue to oppose reversion.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Jim Adams, of the Blackberry District, also said he had not heard about a potential study.

“Honestly, I don’t know what to say,” Adams said. “They’ve gone through this cycle several times, so something being their choice ... I really don’t know what to say.”

Adams said that without knowing the city’s intent behind requesting a study, it is too early to form an opinion.

Vice-Chairman Joe Bryant, of the Collinsville District, said he was aware of the conversation but was not familiar with the details.

“I think that it’s something that needs to be discussed. I don’t know how to react. I’ve never been for reversion,” Bryant said.

Debra Buchanan, of the Horsepasture District, said she learned about the study through media coverage.

“Of course, they have every opportunity to do that if that’s what they choose to do. We can’t tell the city what to do,” she said.

Garrett Dillard, of the Iriswood District, said the city has the right to conduct a study if it chooses.

“They have to do what they feel might be best,” he said. “I hope it’s not a process like it was before, where it caused all this tension and commotion and confusion.”

Dillard said he hopes for a more constructive process this time.

“Hopefully they come together first and foremost as a board, as a council, and they can get on one accord first and foremost and get with their citizens and follow the process accordingly,” he said.

Travis Pruitt, of the Ridgeway District, said he also learned about the potential study from reading the newspaper.

“We didn’t know anything in advance, but again, it’s the prerogative of the city,” he said. “The way the state law stands now, it’s hurtful to any county government to absorb the city, so they can study and spend their money, but again, it will go to that referendum of the city citizens. But it’s not good news for Henry County, because again, we’re taking the bad side of the deal.”

Pam Cobler, of the Reed Creek District, said she understood that under state law, reversion would go to a referendum unless the General Assembly says otherwise.

“Being a new supervisor, I guess it’s their prerogative to do a study,” she said. “I mean, I’ve heard a lot of information and comments. When I say a lot, as it has been discussed either on social media or whatever, but I don’t feel like the reversion impacts me at all as a new supervisor.”

Cobler added that she did not support reversion during her campaign.

# PSA

(cont. from page 1)

“We know rate increases are never easy, and we’re sensitive to the impact on our customers,” said General Manager Dale Wagoner. “But this step is critical to ensuring our water and wastewater systems remain resilient, responsive, and ready to serve future generations. It’s about more than keeping things running—it’s about responding to growing financial pressures with long-term, responsible planning.”

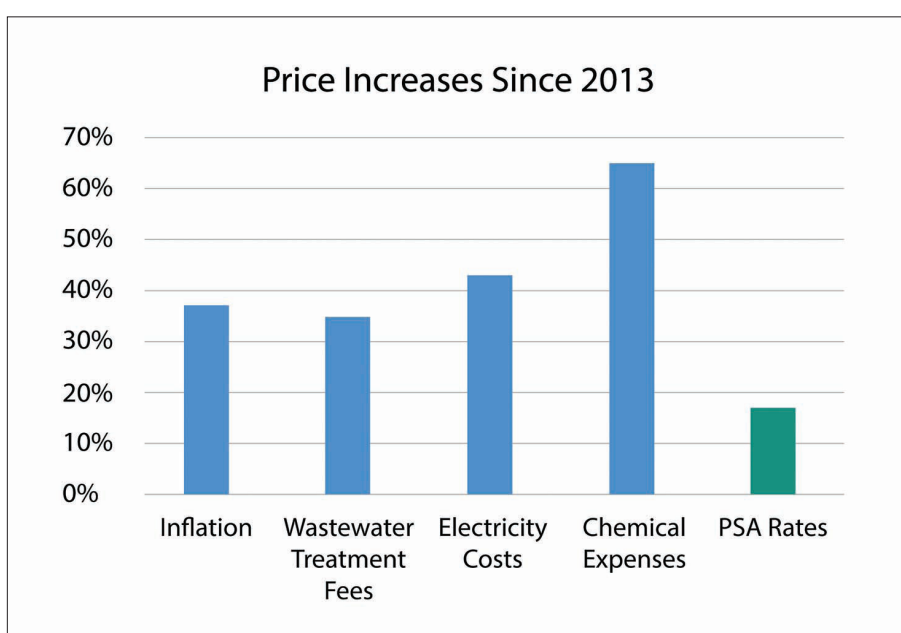
If the rate changes go into effect, the monthly rate for residential customers would be \$35 per service up to 4,000 gallons of usage. This figure still falls below state and national averages which hover around \$40 per month for similar services.

The overall proposed budget for the next fiscal year is \$14,818,239 with approximately \$3.2 million of that amount dedi-

cated to capital improvements and debt service. The operational portion of the proposed budget amounts to \$11,558,345 which is a 6.7 percent increase from the current fiscal year.

A contributing factor to the increase in the operational budget is the maintenance for newly installed backup generators. The rise in industry-wide construction and repair costs are also expected to increase property insurance by nearly 15%. Overtime costs and on-call compensation were also adjusted to catch up with rising base wages. Funds are also being dedicated to provide a 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment to employees.

Since the last rate adjustment, wastewater treatment fees have increased by 35 percent, electricity has jumped 43 percent, and inflation has risen by more than 37



Percentage increase in operational costs since 2013 compared to the proposed change in PSA rates for fiscal year 2025-2026.

percent. A work session has been scheduled for 6 p.m., on Monday, April 28, for the PSA Board of Directors to review the budget and make any necessary adjustments before its final passage.

# Funds awarded for market, feasibility study at Bassett Community Center

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) has awarded \$35,000 in technical assistance grant funds to support a market and feasibility study for the Bassett Community Center, a key step toward its potential redevelopment.

The West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) applied for \$50,000 in 2024 on behalf of the community center through the Virginia Brownfields Assistance Fund. The funding was awarded in January 2025, unlocking \$35,000 for the study.

This funding comes from an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Community-Wide Assessment Grant for States and Tribes, which was awarded to VDEQ in 2022. The Bassett Community Center was selected due to the presence of asbestos-containing materials, its historical and social significance, potential for redevelopment, and limited available resources.

“The Planning District Commission’s commitment to the site and the willingness of the community center stakeholders to collaborate and support

these efforts were also factors in the decision to allocate grant funds for this work,” said Karen Weber, Brownfields Coordinator for VDEQ.

While this specific grant does not require a local match, it will provide matching funds for a separate Virginia Brownfields Assistance Fund grant previously awarded for asbestos abatement in parts of the building. The documents produced from the study will be critical in securing future funding for additional environmental cleanup and redevelopment work.

“I view a market and feasibility study as an essential foundation for the future of the Bassett Community Center,” said Rebekah Morgan, WPPDC Director of Community Development. “It will give us a clear understanding of what the community truly needs and what is realistically achievable, helping to align our vision with economic, recreational, and regional development goals. Making data-driven decisions now ensures we create opportunities and programming that serves the Bassett community

well for years to come.”

VDEQ has contracted Stantec, a consulting firm based in Ashland, Va., to conduct the study. Their task is to evaluate the market feasibility of reopening the community center’s building and pool. The final report will include maps, graphics, and tables to clearly present their findings, which will help guide the next steps in pursuing funding for rehabilitation.

“We appreciate this funding, which will be a crucial step in moving the project forward,” said Ronnie Dillard, vice president of the Board for the Bassett Community Center.

The WPPDC is a regional planning organization serving Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania counties; the cities of Danville and Martinsville; and the Town of Rocky Mount. Its mission is to foster regional collaboration among local governments, educational institutions, economic and workforce development organizations, and other key stakeholders. Learn more at westpiedmontpdc.org.

# Vietnam

(cont. from page 1)



The service of local veterans is remembered at the Vietnam Wall and Bench located at Bassett Historical Center.

the war is still going to need the roads and bridges.”

Millner and his fellow soldiers ensured equipment could be safely withdrawn. “I was responsible for loading up equipment and making sure it made it back home to the States.”

He worked grueling hours. “The heat of the jungle, the complexity of the situation, fast moving. My average day while in Vietnam was 14 to 16 hours. Seven days a week.”

Millner thought he'd be heading home after that operation, but missed his cutoff date by two days and was reassigned to Long Minh. “They didn't have a job for me there as a maintenance person. They asked me to be a defense NCO, and I asked well what's that? It's a nice name for a sergeant of guard.”

He was tasked with working in shifts to brief other sergeants and officers on the perimeter of Long Minh—the largest U.S. base in Vietnam at the time. As a sergeant of the guard, Millner trained security staff, protected military property, enforced regulations, and maintained security in an increasingly hostile environment.

He also navigated complex racial dynamics. Millner was one of few Black men in a unit of mostly Southern white soldiers during a time of civil unrest in the U.S. He built trust by living alongside his men and connecting with them directly. He helped troops under his guidance by spending time with them, talking to them casually, living together and earning their camaraderie and respect.

During his seven months in Vietnam, Millner said he was attacked only three times—but those moments stayed with him.

“When I heard car alarms go off or loud noises, I'd drop to the ground and get to cover,” he said.

After his tour, Millner continued serving in the Army as a teacher and maintenance specialist until retiring in the 1980s. He was promoted to warrant officer and served in locations including Fort Bragg and Germany. His Army

career spanned 23 years and four months.

When asked what he wanted future generations to understand about Vietnam, Millner said: “It's not all like what you see in the movies. There are some things that are not shown, and there are some things that shouldn't be shown. War is nasty. War is hell. In Vietnam, there were a lot of somewhat secure areas, but no place was completely secure. You had to be alert at all times.”

He explained that the intense mental stress was part of why tours lasted only a year.

Waren “Sonny” Richardson, a helicopter mechanic during the war, also shared his story.

Unlike Millner, Richardson enlisted at 22. Though drafted in 1969, he qualified for an exemption as the only son in a family with five sisters. Still, he chose to go.

“I saw a bunch of guys doing things to themselves so they wouldn't have to go. I wanted to experience it. I pray I can get back and tell about it. When you're the only boy in the family, people would think you're a sissy for not going since you didn't have to. I wanted to go in.”

Richardson joined a crew of helicopter repairmen who had to learn fast — taking apart and reassembling Chinook helicopters in the field. After nine months, he knew every part of the aircraft.

He recalled his first day in Vietnam, overwhelmed by the heat and the long flight. “You couldn't drink enough water, you can't even drink the water, it's so dirty. I thought, it's what I volunteered for. But I never told anybody.”

“I never regretted volunteering, even when bad things happened. It's something men, well not all men, should experience.”

His job was to resupply troops in combat zones. “They had to clean a spot, clear a location and go land and deliver supplies. We disengaged that cargo hook, that bundle fell to the ground and we're gone.” He also remembered wounded sol-



American Legion Homer Dillard Post #78 Commander Waren A. “Sonny” Richardson presented a scholarship last year to Martinsville High School student Tayemar Hodge. Members of the post often work with area schools and students.

diers pleading for evacuation. “We couldn't do it, we were a massive target.”

Richardson said his unit was shot at nearly every day, but the helicopter's hull often protected them. “After a while you get used to it. Gotta pull up the car. It's the same thing, while you are in the war you gotta do it right.”

Like Millner, he vividly remembered the heat. “If it was 80 degrees, we would've plum froze. That was cold to us. We were used to 120 degrees; 80 degrees in Vietnam was cold.”

Though he kept it quiet while serving, Richardson never regretted volunteering. “It was very dangerous. I've told a lot of guys over there, macho this and macho that. In the long run, you'd see these guys praying all the time. There are no atheists in foxholes.”

After his military service, Richardson worked at Dupont and later spent 22 years as a bus driver for Henry County Schools. He is now involved with Millner in the American Legion Homer Dillard Post #78. The American Legion is the

nation's largest veteran organization. Richardson is commander of the post and Millner is an Adjutant. Both men see their involvement as a positive force in their lives.

Richardson helps veterans access benefits through the VA. “It's helped me tremendously,” he said.

The two also visit schools to talk with students about their time in Vietnam. “Yes, kids listen to veterans. You would be surprised. Kids are bumping into each other just to look at us with uniforms on,” Richardson said. He often sends congratulatory letters to students and teachers, who respond warmly.

Support from friends and family, they said, kept them grounded long after the war ended.

According to the Bassett Historical Center, 446 service members from Martinsville and Henry County served in the Vietnam War. Twenty-six were reported killed in action. The number of living Vietnam veterans is expected to drop below five million by 2027—making the preservation of their stories more important than ever.

## Community Chronicles

By Jarred Marlowe

The passing of George Hairston Sr. in 1827 marked a pivotal moment in the history of both Patrick and Henry Counties in Virginia. With his death, the western part of the expansive Beaver Creek Plantation — which stretched from Patrick County along the Smith River to Blackberry Creek in Henry County — passed into the hands of his son, John Hairston. At the heart of this estate lay a budding iron enterprise that would soon shape the region's industrial legacy.

In 1836, nearly a decade after George Sr.'s death, John Hairston joined forces with his brother George Hairston II — known locally as “Ol' Rusty” — and their cousin Peter Hairston to establish the Union Iron Works Company. Their mission was clear: to grow and refine the small-scale iron production started by their father. Utilizing a combination of slave labor and hired workers, the company worked the land to extract valuable iron ore from



The entrance to one of the old iron mines, taken from one of the trails at Philpott Lake. (Photo taken by the US Army Corps of Engineers)

the mines (which are currently located in, around, and under Philpott and Fairy Stone Lakes), laying the foundation for a bustling iron industry in the region.

The daily rhythm of the Iron Works echoed through the hills — hardwood logs were burned into char-

coal, and iron ore was smelted in what was referred to simply as “blast.” Skilled blacksmiths and local craftsmen then took the raw pig iron and forged it into usable tools and goods, binding the enterprise deeply to the surrounding community and economy.

The death of Pe-

ter Hairston in 1840 marked another turning point. John sold his share of the business to his brother, making George Hairston II the sole owner. Under George's leadership in the 1850s, the operation expanded further with the acquisition of the “Forge Tract.” Despite these efforts, the

iron business began to decline amid growing economic and operational challenges. Eventually, George's son Samuel took over day-to-day management, but he too would sell off the family's remaining interests in the forge.

Although historical documentation is

scarce, many believe that the Iron Works played a role during the Civil War. Oral histories and regional folklore suggest that the Confederacy made use of the facility and that ore from the site was transported to the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond. Some legends go even further, claiming that iron from the Forge was used in the armor plating of the famous Confederate ironclad, the Merrimac — lending a storied air of national significance to this local venture.

Today, the tale of the Union Iron Works is more than just industrial history — it's a story of ambition, legacy, and the enduring ties between land, labor, and community in southern Virginia.

Jarred Marlowe is a local resident and historian. He is a member of the Col. George Waller Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Blue & Gray Education Society, and the committee chair for the Martinsville-Henry County 250 Committee. He may be reached at marlowe-ja15@gmail.com.

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

# Hillcrest Baptist Brings Church to the Community



Hillcrest Baptist Church plays a free concert in the Rural King parking lot.

**By Jessica Dillon**

Hillcrest Baptist Church hosted a community concert in the Rural King parking lot on April 22, featuring gospel music, Easter egg giveaways, and free food for the public. The event was the first of its kind for the church and aimed to raise awareness in the community about Christianity.

Music Director Aaron Stewart helped organize the event. “We just wanted to have the opportunity to meet the community, to greet the community, to let the community know that Hillcrest is a loving church that is

willing to meet their spiritual (needs) and to introduce them to a relationship with Jesus Christ.”

The same band that performed at the event also plays regularly at the church. The band played well-known songs that they hoped “people can sing along with.”

There was a shopping spree drawing sponsored by Rural King, and the church gave away Starbucks gift cards.

David Biers helped prepare food for the event. “You see we got plenty of help and that means a lot. We all believe in God, and God

is going to make it work for us.” Biers has attended the church for three years and said, “It’s a real loving church.”

Jessica Whalen, who helped come up with ideas for the event, handed out Easter eggs. “Leading people to Jesus is the way to go,” said Whalen. Stewart added that other church members “rally” around events and arrived at Rural King before he did to begin setup.

Hillcrest Baptist Church is located at 18075 A L Philpott Highway, Ridgeway. Church services are available online via Facebook and YouTube.

## Lady Slippers charms during L.C. Maxie author event



L.C. Maxie signs copies of her new release Lady Slippers at Magnolia & Main Books.

**By Jessica Dillon**

Magnolia & Main Books welcomed readers to an intimate author event on April 12 to celebrate the release of “Lady Slippers,” the second installment in the Whippoorwill Gap series by local author L.C. Maxie.

A sequel to “The Robin’s Nest,” Maxie’s latest work continues her foray into paranormal women’s fiction, a genre blending fantasy and real-world themes. The story shifts focus to Olivia, the daughter of main character Harper Woods, as she navigates adulthood and begins to learn life’s harder lessons—alongside a little Appalachian magic.

Maxie, a retired librarian, has long had a passion for books, but her writing journey didn’t begin in fiction. She previously published non-fiction titles before turning her imagination toward storytelling. She met Magnolia & Main owner Tracie Morton as a customer, and the connection quickly grew into a creative partnership. The bookstore began stocking “The Robin’s Nest” and invited Maxie to host a launch event for her second novel.

“She gave a talk on Appalachian faeries and signed books for customers,” Morton said. “We

had such a great turnout, and it was lovely seeing the community support a local author.”

According to the book’s description, Lady Slippers is “the whimsical second book in the Whippoorwill Gap paranormal women’s fiction series. If you like spooky romance, adorable pets, and believable fantasy, then you’ll love L.C. Maxie’s enchanting adventure.”

During her talk, Maxie discussed regional folklore, shared myths of supernatural beings, and fielded questions from readers. The conversation gave fans deeper insight into the magical world she’s crafted—and into her inspiration for stepping into fiction.

“I have always loved books,” Maxie said. “It seemed like the natural fit for me, something fun to do.”

She reflected on the shift from nonfiction to storytelling. “With nonfiction books, you just kind of do research and write what you’ve learned,” she said. “I just wrote what I had, and the second novel I wrote due to reactions from the first one.”

That feedback from readers led her to shape the second book around Olivia, a character who initially drew criticism. “I planned that out,”

Maxie said. “I sat down and said people hate that character, and I want her to learn some lessons.”

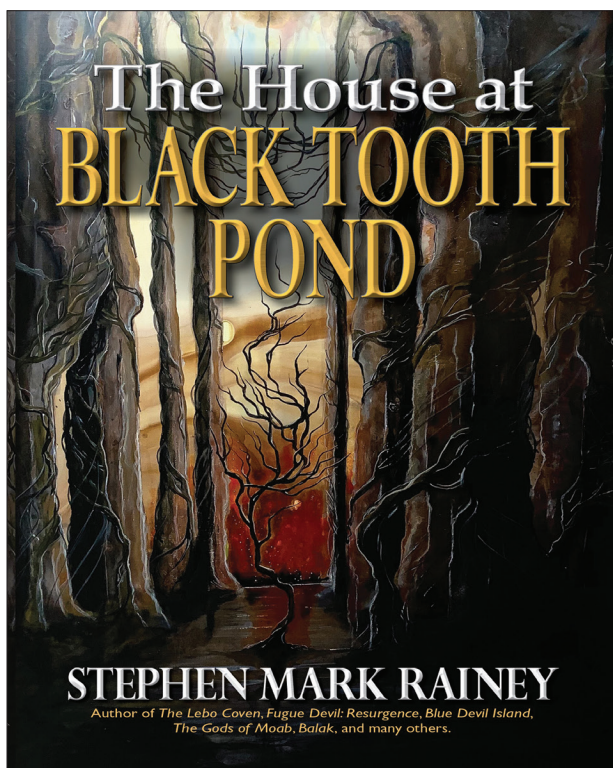
Maxie is already at work on the third installment in the series. Though it’s still in early stages, she said she’s leaning toward a title inspired by the theme of a “Swan Song.”

Throughout her creative journey, Maxie said she’s remained fascinated by cryptids and mystical folklore—elements that heavily influence her writing.

“I like magical things,” she said. “I enjoy that idea of mysterious beings that can’t be seen.” She cited several books during her talk and said she spent time digging through Appalachian tales to gather inspiration.

Beyond the pages of her novels, Maxie hopes to inspire others to chase their creative passions, no matter their age.

“It’s not too late to do what you always dreamed of doing, because I always dreamed of writing books,” she said. “Once I retired and had time to do it, I just sat down and did it. If you really want to do something, it’s possible to do it if you sit down and take the time to make the effort.”



**email us**  
DHALL@THEENTERPRISE.NET

## Book signing set for May 17

Martinsville author Stephen Mark Rainey will be signing copies of his books from 11 a.m.–2 p.m. on Saturday, May 17, at Magnolia & Main

Books, 810 Main Street, Ridgeway. Rainey is known for his books of the “scary” variety, and some of them—including his latest novel, “The House

at Black Tooth Pond,” which will be available at the event—are set in a fictionalized version of Martinsville and surrounding areas.

INAUGURAL  
**RIDGEWAY BEE Festival**  
 Saturday May 3rd  
 10:00am-3:00pm  
 \*RAIN OR SHINE\*

Music - Crafts - Food- Plant Exchange-  
 Family Activities --Door Prizes -  
 Beekeeping Demo and Observation  
 Hive

Town Park, Almond St  
 Ridgeway VA

For a vendor form or more info:  
 jeanne.ridgewaytown@gmail.com

## Buzzing with excitement; Ridgeway to celebrate Bee City title

The town of Ridgeway was recently designated as a Bee City. It is celebrating that designation with a free, fun, family-friendly event on Saturday, May 3, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will be held rain or shine. The event will feature at least two

bands, Scuffle Hill Brewery, food trucks, Beekeepers, crafts, bounce house, face painting, art contest and much, much more. For a vendor form or more information, email jeanne.ridgewaytown@gmail.com.

## Rapid Social Security changes leave Virginians vulnerable to scams



**Zamone Perez**  
*Virginia News Connection*

Back-and-forth decisions on Social Security policies have created confusion, which may leave some Virginians more vulnerable to scams. Last month, the Social Security Administration announced in-person or online appointments would be required to sign up for benefits, instead of customer support by phone. The decision has now been reversed. Jim Dau, state director of AARP Virginia, said the changes give con artists room to come up with new scams. He noted they often start with a phone call, text or email about something “urgent.” If you receive such communication saying it is from the Social Security Administration, Dau warned it is a scam. “This is the perfect kind of recipe for financial predators to step in and escalate Social Security scams to defraud beneficiaries of their money,” Dau stressed. “Social Security scams are effective in this kind of environment -- where people are getting information from here, and bits of information from here -- where we are going to see more and more Social Security scams.”

Trump’s billionaire adviser Elon

Musk has said Social Security has “massive” amounts of fraud but a review by the Social Security Administration’s Inspector General has found the agency has made improper payments less than 1% of the time. More than 1.6 million Virginians receive Social Security benefits. Dau emphasized the monthly income is a lifeline to people across the Commonwealth. He added the administration’s initial changes which would have required people to sign up for benefits in person would have negatively affected seniors. “The prospect of having to go to an in-person meeting at your local Social Security office, hopefully get there on time at a point where the line isn’t too long and you have a reasonable chance of actually seeing somebody that day,” Dau outlined. “And of course, hopefully your Social Security office is open that day - or at all anymore.”

The administration has announced lease terminations of nearly 4% of Social Security field offices. An analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities finds nine percent of Virginia seniors already live more than 45 miles from the nearest office.

## New branding launches to help consumers find Virginia meat products

New branding unveiled at the Virginia Beef Expo will help connect Virginia consumers with meat products that have been produced solely in the Commonwealth. “Virginia Verified Beef” will be part of a Virginia Verified Meat brand that demonstrates to consumers that the product was bred, born, raised, and processed in the state. “From farms across Virginia, our cattle farmers and other livestock farmers deliver high-quality products to kitchen tables around the world,” said Governor Glenn Youngkin. “I am honored to promote this new brand that will help consumers identify those meats produced to the highest standards by our farmers throughout the Commonwealth. Our communities are financially stronger and physically healthier when they have access to the best quality food from within our great state.”

“Virginia’s beef industry helps the Commonwealth thrive, with more than 574,000 head of cattle contributing over \$524 million to the state’s economy,” said Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Matthew Lohr. “Beef cattle and calves are Virginia’s second-largest agricultural commodity, and we are pleased to recognize that impact as we unveil the new Virginia Verified Beef logo and Virginia Verified Meat brand.”

“As a beef farmer myself, I’m proud to see Virginia stand with its farmers and commit to making it easier and more appealing for consumers to find the products that have been made on their doorstep,” said Delegate Michael Weber, patron of the legislation. “We have beef and other meats of the highest quality bred here in the Commonwealth, born here, raised here, and processed all right here. Now consumers will have a distinct logo that will help them find that high-quality, wholesome food

when they’re shopping for their families.”

“We’re delighted to see Virginia legislators support Virginia’s beef and livestock farmers with the passage of this new Virginia Verified meat certification, and the Virginia Cattlemen’s Association is proud to be authorized to certify Virginia Verified Beef products,” said Brandon Reeves, Executive Director of the Virginia Cattlemen’s Association. “Virginia farmers work hard to produce quality meats in the Commonwealth, and we’re excited to have this new tool to certify these meat products and draw consumers to buy products that support their local farmers.”

“It’s always a great day to support Virginia farmers and consumers, and we think Virginia Verified Meat branding will help shoppers find the best local products to feed their families,” said Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Joseph Guthrie. “Consumers can be confident when they buy these products that the meat was bred, born, raised, and processed here in the Commonwealth.”

The creation of Virginia Verified Meat certification was passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 2024. The Virginia Verified Beef logo was the first of this branding line to be unveiled, during a presentation at the Virginia Beef Expo in Harrisonburg, Va. Secretary Matthew Lohr and Commissioner Joe Guthrie were in attendance, with recorded remarks by Governor Glenn Youngkin.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will administer the Virginia Verified Meat program working with authorized industry partners like the Virginia Cattlemen’s Association to provide certification. Virginia Verified Meat includes qualifying cattle, goats, sheep or swine.

## Two Critz residents charged after traffic stop in Bassett

On April 17, 2025, at approximately 2:20 p.m., the Henry County Sheriff’s Office Drug Interdiction Unit conducted a traffic stop in the 1000 block of Crestridge Road in Bassett.



Items seized during a traffic stop.

The driver was identified as Darian Rayburn Tatum, 51, of Critz, who was found to have an outstanding warrant from the City of Martinsville for substitution of a sample to defeat a drug or alcohol screening test.

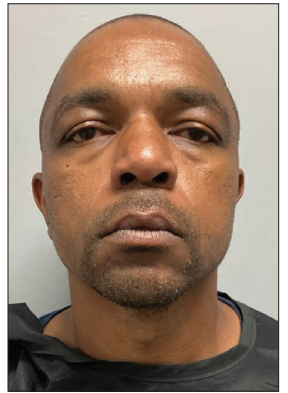
The passenger initially provided false identification but was later identified as Stacey Rea Biggs, 31, also of Critz. Biggs was wanted out of Patrick County for failure to appear and out of Henry County for a third or subsequent offense of selling a Schedule I/II controlled substance.

Henry County Sheriff’s Office K-9 Zajo was deployed and alerted to the presence of narcotics. A subsequent search of the vehicle uncovered a SCCY 9mm handgun, numerous bags containing suspected methamphetamine and fentanyl, digital scales, packaging materials, and \$913 in U.S. currency. The suspected narcotics will be sent to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science Laboratory for further analysis.

As a result of the investigation, the follow-



Stacey Rea Biggs



Darian Rayburn Tatum

ing additional charges were filed:

Tatum was charged with driving while license revoked, possession of a Schedule I/II drug while possessing a firearm, possession with intent to distribute a Schedule I/II drug, possession of a firearm by a convicted non-violent felon and possession of a concealed weapon by a convicted felon.

Biggs was charged with possession with intent to distribute a Schedule I/II drug and falsely identifying oneself to law enforce-

ment.

Both were taken into custody without incident and transported to the Henry County Adult Detention Center, where they are being held without bond.

The Henry County Sheriff’s Office remains committed to removing illegal narcotics and firearms from the community. Anyone with information related to drug activity is encouraged to contact the Sheriff’s Office at 276-638-8751 or anonymously through Crimestoppers at 63-CRIME (632-7463).

**Norris Memorial Services**

1500 Kings Mtn Rd.  
 Martinsville, VA,  
 276-638-2778

Visit our website for pricing:  
[www.norrismemorialservices.com](http://www.norrismemorialservices.com)

Be sure to like the Henry County Enterprise on Facebook