



Aretha Ferrell-Benavides is among four finalists for the city manager post in Elgin, Texas. A Meet and Greet is scheduled there for July 29, with formal interviews to begin July 30, according to <https://elgintexas.gov/>.

City manager placed on paid leave, council orders forensic audit

By Staff Reports

Following a closed session meeting Wednesday, Martinsville City Council approved several major actions, including allocating \$20,000 for an outside firm to conduct a forensic audit and placing City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides on paid administrative leave, effective immediately.

Councilman Aaron Rawls made the motion to
(See City Manager p. 9)

Deputy says city officials signaled Rawls' removal; seeks to set aside default

By Debbie Hall

In a recent court filing, Martinsville Sheriff's Deputy Reva Keen alleged that she "responded to nonverbal signals" from other city officials when removing Councilman Aaron Rawls from the March 25 Martinsville City Council meeting.

Rawls filed a federal civil rights lawsuit on June 2, alleging his First, Fourth, and 14th Amendment rights were violated during the meeting. The suit names both Keen and Ferrell-Benavides as defendants.

In the new filing by attorney Ward Armstrong of the Armstrong Law Firm of Va., PLLC, Keen outlined reasons the court should set aside the entry of default against her, and allow her to file a response.

The 11-page filing and accompanying pages of exhibits, allege in part that before the March 25 meeting, Keen was informed by Human Resources Director Travis Hodge that Rawls "had thrown a chair during a closed session earlier that day."

Between the closed and open session meeting, the filing alleges that Jones "came up to me and told me something to the effect of I could do whatever I needed to do, which I understood to be in reference to my responsibilities" to maintain safety and order, the filing alleged.

Near the end of the public meeting, the filing alleges Rawls "launched into a speech that quickly became aggressive and personal, including clear references and verbal attacks ..." of Councilman Rayshaun Gravely and members of the public. Rawls also "made remarks critical of city leadership and voiced opposition to a pay raise" for Ferrell-Benavides.

Jones "repeatedly requested" Rawls to "fall in

order," but Rawls did not comply. After "receiving non-verbal signals from both the City Manager and Mayor indicating" Rawls should be removed, "Keen used her discretion and experience to approach" Rawls and instruct him to leave the meeting.

The filing notes that Keen "was concerned for the safety of those present, particularly given the high tensions in the room," the earlier report of Rawls throwing a chair, "and reasonably feared a fight could break out between" Rawls and Gravely, whom Rawls "did not hesitate to personally attack."

After observing Rawls' conduct and receiving the signals, Keen escorted him from the meeting room "without using physical force, simply guiding him toward the side door exit as he, by all appearances, voluntarily complied," according to the filing.

The evidence shows Keen "was fulfilling this important governmental function" when she removed Rawls "after being signaled by Mayor Jones and City Manager Ferrell-Benavides to do so. Her actions were a measured response aimed at preserving order and ensuring public safety in accordance with her duties, not an effort to silence (Rawls) speech or seize him," the filing states.

Keen is seeking qualified immunity, which "attaches when an official's conduct does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known."

"Keen will have much more to say about her defenses" and Rawls' claims in future pleadings, "as a motion to set aside default is not the appropriate setting in which to address all of these matters," the filing states.

Charges filed in Ridgeway shooting incident

A Ridgeway man has been charged with two counts of first-degree murder in connection with a double homicide Tuesday, according to Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis.

The sheriff said his office received a report at approximately 12:58 a.m. Tuesday, July 22, that a man had been shot and was lying in the road in front of a residence at 267 Meeks Road in Ridgeway.

Deputies arrived to find a deceased man



Joshua Corbett Coleman is facing several charges in connection with a double homicide in Ridgeway.

with multiple gunshot wounds. He was later identified as William Leroy Morey, 68.

Authorities determined that Morey

had traveled to Meeks Road to check on the well-being of Mandy Coleman.

Due to the circumstances, deputies entered the home at 267 Meeks Road. Inside, they found a second deceased individual—identified as Mandy Michelle Coleman, 22—with an apparent single gunshot wound.

During the early stages of the investigation, Mandy Coleman's husband, Joshua Corbett Coleman,
(See Charges p. 3)

Cobler tapped as VACNI Advisory Board member



Dr. Pam Cobler (right) was sworn in by Henry County Circuit Court Clerk Jennifer Ashworth (left) as part of the Virginia Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (VACNI) Advisory Board.

By Taylor Boyd

Dr. Pam Cobler, the Reed Creek District representative on the Henry County Board of Supervisors, was formally sworn in as a member of the Virginia Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (VACNI) Advisory Board on Tuesday, July 22.

Cobler was sworn in by Henry County Circuit Court Clerk Jennifer Ashworth to a four-year term that will end on June 30, 2029.

According to the VACNI website, Virginia is committed to improving the treatment and care of residents with traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injuries. The Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative Trust Fund, administered by a governor-appointed advisory board, provides periodic grant funding to Virginia-based organizations, institutions, and researchers. The board disburses the funds through
(See Cobler p. 10)



The Henry County Board of Supervisors presented a resolution honoring outgoing Public Safety Director Matt Tatum for his years of service.

County honors retiring public safety head, names successor

By Taylor Boyd

The Henry County Board of Supervisors on Monday recognized Public Safety Director Matt Tatum for more than 20 years of service ahead of his upcoming retirement.

Tatum, who joined the county in

2002 and was appointed director in 2015, will retire on July 31. His successor, Tim Duffer, will take over the role beginning Wednesday. (Related story inside)

During the board's regular meeting,
(See County p. 11)

Project Lifesaver expands locally



Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper, Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis, and Deputy Matthew Wiggington demonstrate Project Lifesaver.

By Jessica Dillon

The Henry County Sheriff's Office and the Martinsville City Sheriff's Office are working together to expand Project Lifesaver, a free program designed to locate individuals who are prone to wandering due to cognitive conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or autism.

"We'll put it on those who are at risk of wandering, whether it be from dementia, Alzheimer's, autism,

or any other cognitive disorder that may cause someone to wander away and not be able to be contacted," Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis said.

Project Lifesaver provides wearable tracking devices to participants. If a person goes missing, specially trained teams use the device's unique frequency to help locate them quickly and return them home safely.

The devices, which
(See Lifesaver p. 9)

VISIT

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FOR MORE UPDATES



Campbell hosts First Responders at Martinsville Speedway

By Jessica Dillon

Martinsville Speedway President Clay Campbell hosted a special event to honor local first responders on National Hot Dog Day. The celebration brought together deputies, firefighters, and rescue teams from across Henry County and Martinsville to enjoy the Speedway’s famous hot dogs—served out of season for the occasion.

Campbell explained the inspiration behind the event.

“You know, today’s National Hot Dog Day. That’s where the idea came from,” he said. “We wanted to do something meaningful, and we came up with the idea to honor our first responders. They’re so critical to what we do at the Speedway, but more importantly, they’re critical to the community. We wanted to tie them in and show recognition and appreciation for what they do for us 365 days a year.”

The event drew a strong turnout, with representatives from numerous agencies.

“We saw a lot of firefighters here, city police, Collinsville Rescue, Bassett Fire Department, and, of course, the county deputies,” Campbell said. “I hate naming everyone because I’m afraid I’ll miss



Clay Campbell and Sheriff Wayne Davis celebrate National Hot Dog Day at Martinsville Speedway headquarters.

somebody, but we had most everybody here today.”

Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis expressed his appreciation for the partnership with Martinsville Speedway and reflected on the event.

“I wasn’t here all day, but when I arrived, I had the opportunity to enjoy some of these fine Martinsville Speedway hot dogs,” Davis

said with a smile. “We’re thankful to have Martinsville Speedway and its race events right here in our community. It’s truly an honor, both as a community member and as sheriff, to work daily with the racetrack to protect the venue during events.”

Davis also praised the Speedway’s contributions to the region.

“Clay and the Speedway bring a

lot to this community, and we’re grateful for the partnership and the support they show to our first responders,” he said. “We had a good portion of our deputies here today — that’s a great turnout.” About 60 deputies stopped by for a free meal.

Campbell shared his enthusiasm for the day and hinted at future plans.

“This was my idea, to honor the first responders. Every once in a while, you come up with a good one,” he joked. “It was a really good day, and somebody already asked me if we’d do it again. I can guarantee this was the first, but it won’t be the last.”

Looking ahead, Campbell said the Speedway is preparing for a busy fall season.

“We have a release coming out tomorrow about an event during the Cup weekend. We’re excited about that, and we’re gearing up for a full fall season,” he said.

In September, the fair will take place alongside the much-anticipated ValleyStar Credit Union 300, drawing visitors and motorsport fans. Following that, the Speedway will host the extended D500 weekend at the end of October.

New funding expands harm reduction efforts to save lives



Ariel Johnson (left), director of operations for VHRC’s West Piedmont branch, stands with Dr. Sandy Strayer, program officer at The Harvest Foundation.



The Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition team includes (top left to right) Catina Wright, community liaison and housing advocate; Tom Salyer, infectious disease treatment coordinator; Adriane Adams, outreach specialist; Jessica Woods, volunteer; Ariel Johnson, director of operations; Aishah Jones, outreach specialist; and Unique Phillips, domestic violence case manager.



Adriane Adams, a certified peer recovery specialist, is an outreach specialist with the Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition.

With overdose rates in Martinsville and Henry County far exceeding the state average, The Harvest Foundation is investing \$444,355 over three years to expand harm reduction services through the Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition (VHRC).

VHRC, which uses a peer outreach model, offers services that include opioid overdose reversal using naloxone, testing and treatment navigation for hepatitis C and HIV, mental and sexual health services, and referrals to substance use treatment programs.

“We must all be aware of the health challenges associated with substance use,” said Dr. Sandy Strayer, program officer at The Harvest Foundation. “Preventing the spread of disease and supporting pathways to recovery is part of our work to build a community where everyone can thrive and have hope for their futures and the future of Martinsville-Henry County.”

The grant will allow VHRC to launch a mail-based distribution program to reach rural residents with naloxone, fentanyl test

strips, sterile supplies, and educational materials. It will also expand access to testing, treatment navigation, and overdose prevention services.

“Thanks to the generous support of the Harvest Foundation, VA Harm Reduction Coalition will be able to expand our outreach and education efforts into rural communities where access to infectious disease prevention and care is often limited,” said Ariel Johnson, director of operations for VHRC’s West Piedmont branch.

“Our work centers around one core belief: the opposite of addiction is connection. While many organizations require abstinence before offering support, we meet people where they are — without judgment,” Johnson said. “This funding strengthens our ability to build trust, share life-saving resources, and walk alongside those who use drugs as they navigate their paths toward health and dignity.”

VHRC serves about 1,500 clients annually across Southwest Virginia, including nearly 400 in the West Piedmont area, which in-

cludes Martinsville and Henry County.

According to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Martinsville reported 105 fatal overdoses per 100,000 residents in 2023, and Henry County reported 60 per 100,000—both far above the statewide average of 29. That same year, the area’s HIV incidence rate was 30 per 100,000 residents, compared to the state average of 10.

“This award from the Harvest Foundation will truly save lives,” said VHRC Executive Director Danny Clawson. “As funding for substance use and recovery services becomes increasingly unreliable, partnerships with local foundations that are grounded in the community are essential for continued growth.”

“While other service organizations are closing offices and laying off staff, The Harvest Foundation is helping to secure the future of VHRC and ensure that our life-saving resources remain available in our community for years to come.”

To learn more about VHRC’s work, visit www.carrynaloxone.org.

Cooling assistance application period underway

The Virginia Department of Social Services will again provide cooling assistance to qualifying households this year through the Virginia Energy Assistance Program. Applications are currently being accepted through Friday, August 15.

To qualify, a household must have a child six years of age or younger, an adult 60 years or older, or an individual living with a disability. Additionally, there are income requirements based on a household’s gross monthly income (before taxes), which can be found here. Individuals and families in need of cooling assistance are encouraged to apply even if they are unsure of their eligibility status.

Assistance is available for:

- Payment of electric bills and/or security deposits to operate cooling equipment,
 - Repair of a central air conditioning system or heat pump,
 - Purchase of a whole-house fan, including ceiling or attic fans,
 - Purchase and installation of a window unit air conditioner.
- Households who received a one-time benefit of \$365 for payment of electric bills to operate cooling equipment in June will not be eligible to receive additional payments for this type of assistance in 2025. However, these households remain eligible to receive other cooling assistance services listed above, including air conditioning system repair and the purchase of a

whole-house fan. Receiving cooling assistance does not impact a household’s eligibility for fuel or crisis assistance.

Applications (available in English and Spanish) can be submitted to the household’s local department of social services, online via Common-Help, or by calling 855-635-4370 Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eligibility is determined by the local department of social services.

The Virginia Energy Assistance Program has provided relief to local residents through the federally-funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for more than 20 years. Last year, the Department served more than 88,000 Virginia households with cooling assistance through the LIHEAP.

Thank you for reading

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SYMPOSIUM

AMERICA’S

250TH

ANNIVERSARY

MARTINSVILLE-HENRY COUNTY
HERITAGE CENTER & MUSEUM
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Speakers: Cheryl Wilson
(VA250 Executive Director)
Jeff Briggs
Hunter Haskins

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Call 276-694-3101 or email 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.)

Meetings

Monday, July 28
The Henry County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission will hold a joint work session, 1-3 p.m., in the Summerlin Room of the Henry County Administration Building.

Tuesday, July 29
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Municipal Building, 55 W. Church St., Martinsville.

Events

Friday, July 25 - Saturday, July 26
Dino Festival, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Virginia Museum of Natural History, 21 Starling Ave, Martinsville

Saturday, August 2
The Bassett Branch Library Expansion Committee and the Blue Ridge Library Foundation are hosting a BINGO Fundraising Event, to benefit the Bassett Branch Library Expansion Project, at the Historic J.D. Bassett Event Center, 3289 Riverside Dr. Doors open at 4 p.m.; BINGO starts at 6 p.m. Packets include 3 games per play; 20 games per packet. The first packet is \$20; \$10 for each extra. Prizes per game, pull tabs, door prizes, raffle and 50/50. Cash only. Concessions will be available for purchase. Check the Bassett Branch Library Expansion Project Facebook page.

Storytime, 10 a.m., the Hylton Library, 475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer. Free program. No registration is needed.

Sunday, August 3
The Virginia 250 Symposium will celebrate the 250th anniversary of Virginia with three speakers: VA250 Executive Director Cheryl Wilson, Jeff Briggs, and Hunter Haskins. It will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday, August 3, at the MHC Heritage Museum, 1 E. Main St., Martinsville. This program is part of the Sunday Afternoon Lecture Series.

The Churchmen will be in concert in the Family Life Center at Horsepasture Christian Church, 1146 Horsepasture Price Road, Ridgeway, at 6:30 p.m. Free admission. Love offering is appreciated.

Tuesday, August 5
Book sale hosted by Friends of the Blue Ridge Regional Library, in the basement of the main branch, 310 E. Church St., Martinsville, 2-8 p.m. BAG SALE (we provide the brown bag)-fill with as many hard-backed fiction for \$5. Special area for shopping, with shoppers limited to 10 at a time. Next sale is Sept. 19 & 20.

Thursday, August 7
Books and Brews hosted by Martinsville Library staff, 5 p.m., Scuffle Hill Brewing Company, 2550 Virginia Ave., Collinsville. “The God of the Woods” by Liz Moore will be discussed.

Friday, August 8
Music Night 2 Young 2 Old will play in the Alumni Hall at Spencer Penn Centre. Gate opens at 5 p.m., music starts at 6:30. Admission is a \$5 CASH donation. Concessions will be sold.

Saturday, August 9
Breakfast Fundraiser for Brian Lawson, who is currently battling Acute Myeloid Leukemia, 8 to 10 a.m., Mount Vernon Baptist Church, 7174 Mount Valley Road, Axton.

Saturday, August 23
13th Annual Bikers for Babies, MHC, 10 a.m.- noon, in the Big Chair Parking Lot, Broad and Church streets, Uptown, Martinsville.

ONGOING

A series of four classes on genealogy research will be held on the first four Tuesdays in September (2, 9, 16, 23), from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Bassett Historical Center. There is no charge for the classes. When you sign up for the first class, you will automatically be signed up for the other three classes. The classes are limited to 12 people, so please call the Bassett Historical Center at 276-629-9191 to reserve your spot.

Monday Market at Fairy Stone State Park, Mondays, rain or shine, through Labor Day, 5-7 p.m., at Shelters #3 & #4. Cash only market. Free parking.

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 The Ground Floor, 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, coffee, and juice. Dine in or carry out.

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

Book Bingo on the 4th Tuesday of the month at the Martinsville Branch of the Blue Ridge Regional Library, 11 a.m. to noon. Call (276) 403-5430 to register.

Bassett Ruritan Club hosts Rook Music & More on Fridays from 10 a.m. - noon. Play Rook, work puzzles, make a craft and listen to a mixture of bluegrass, country & gospel music by different bands each week. Free to the public, but donations will be used by the club to pay for electricity etc.

The Fontaine Ruritan Club hosts Bingo every Tuesday, 1903 Joseph Martin Highway, Martinsville. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and games begin at 7. Money from Bingo supports community service awards, scholarships, and other community efforts.

Bingocize at Spencer-Penn Centre. Play Bingo and prevent falls with simple exercises. This free class is offered Tuesdays at 10 a.m.

Chair Aerobics at Spencer Penn

Centre, Tuesdays at 9 a.m. with Judi Perrin; \$5 fee, 45 minutes of exercise, strength building and fun.

TOPS FIELDALE VA 0626 meets on Tuesdays at 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Bassett Public Library, 3969 Fairystone Hwy, Bassett. New members are welcome. For more information, 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 mhcdeva.org/meeting-rsvp for Zoom link.

The Martinsville -Henry County Republican Committee meets on its summer schedule. Watch online at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2041797322550450>.

Farmers’ Market at Spencer Penn Centre, Thursdays 4-6 p.m. under the pavilion.

Chair Aerobics, Tuesdays at 9 a.m. with Judi Perrin. 45 minutes of exercise, strength building, \$5 fee, Spencer Penn Centre.

Bingocize, Tuesdays at 10 a.m., help prevent falls with simple exercises. Free at Spencer Penn Centre.

Neighbors in the Know. Join staff and volunteers in the Hylton Library at the Spencer Penn Centre for activities and socializing on the third Monday of each month, 10-11 a.m. This free program is perfect for all ages. Registration is not required.

Charges

(cont. from page 1)

was identified as the suspect in connection with the murders, according to a release.

Deputies also became concerned about the welfare of two small children believed to be living in the home with their mother.

A coordinated effort was launched to locate the children and the suspect, involving the Henry County Sheriff's Office, Rockingham County (N.C.) Sheriff's Office, Eden (N.C.) Police Department, Virginia State Police, and Martinsville Police Department.

At approximately 2:38 p.m., a Henry County Sheriff's deputy conducted a traffic stop on the suspect's vehicle. Joshua Coleman was allegedly found to be armed with a handgun and an AR-15 rifle. He was taken into custody without incident. The two children were found inside the vehicle, safe and unharmed.

In addition to the murder charges, Joshua Corbett Coleman, 30, of Ridgeway, is also charged with two counts

each use of a firearm in the commission of a felony and child abuse and neglect, and one count of shooting from an occupied vehicle.

“This is a heartbreaking and tragic situation that has deeply affected two families and our entire community,” Davis said. “Our hearts go out to the loved ones of the victims during this incredibly difficult time. I want to commend our deputies and our partner agencies for their swift and coordinated response, which led to the safe recovery of the children and the apprehension of the suspect. We are committed to seeking justice for the victims and protecting the innocent.”

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at 276-638-8751 or Crimestoppers at 63-CRIME (632-7463). The Crimestoppers program offers rewards of up to \$2,500 for information related to crimes. The nature of the crime and the value of the information provided determine the amount of the reward.

Man found in roadway identified; death now investigated as homicide

A man found lying in the roadway last week in Ridgeway has been identified as Johnny Carson Carter, 79, of Ridgeway, according to a release from the Virginia State Police.

Authorities initially believed Carter's injuries were caused by a vehicle strike and investigated the case as a suspected hit-and-run. However, as the Virginia State Police Crash Reconstruction Team and the Bureau of Criminal Investigation's Salem Division became involved, investigators determined his injuries were not consistent with a vehicle collision.

Evidence at the scene indicated the incident was a homicide, the release stated.

At 1:21 a.m. on Thursday, July 17, the Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center received a call reporting a man lying in the roadway on

Vista View Lane, according to Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis. Sheriff's deputies and Virginia State Police responded to the scene.

The incident is believed to have occurred between 12:30 and 1:20 a.m.

The Virginia State Police are leading the homicide investigation with assistance from the Henry County Sheriff's Office.

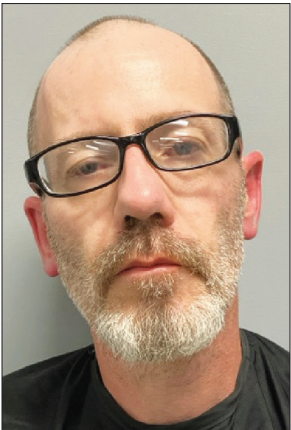
Any updates will be provided by the Virginia State Police, Davis said, noting the agency was already involved due to the initial suspicion of a hit-and-run.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Virginia State Police at 276-632-3060 or 1-800-542-5959, or email questions@vsp.virginia.gov. Call the Henry County Sheriff's Office at 276-638-8751 or 276-63-CRIME.

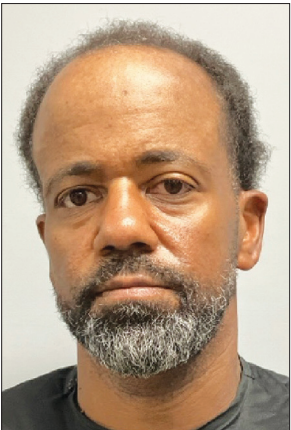
ics in our community. I commend the proactive work of our deputies and K9 unit in this case.”

Anyone with information about illegal drug activity is encouraged to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at (276) 638-8751 or submit tips

anonymously through the Crimestoppers Program at 63-CRIME (632-7463). Crimestoppers offers rewards of up to \$2,500 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of individuals involved in criminal activity.



Billy Joe Plaster



Kevin Devaughn Smith



Prince Eric Hanson



Several items were seized during the traffic stop.

Traffic stop leads to drug arrests, vehicle seizure

Henry County Sheriff's deputies with the Office Narcotics Interdiction Unit conducted a traffic stop on July 17, after allegedly observing Billy Joe Plaster as a passenger in a vehicle driven by Kevin Devaughn Smith. Deputies were aware that Plaster had an outstanding capias for his arrest.

During the stop, K9 Zajo was deployed and gave a positive alert on the vehicle, indicating the possible presence of illegal narcotics. A subsequent search of the vehicle and its occupants led to the seizure of multiple illegal substances and drug-related items.

Another passenger, Prince Eric Hanson, was found to be in possession of a quantity of suspected fen-

tanyl. All suspected narcotics and related evidence will be sent to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science for analysis.

As a result of the investigation, a 2010 Mercedes was seized, and three people were arrested.

Plaster was charged with possession of fentanyl with intent to distribute and a probation violation.

Smith was charged with possession of methamphetamine and possession of fentanyl with intent to distribute.

Hanson was charged with possession of fentanyl with intent to distribute.


Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis said, “The Henry County Sheriff's Office remains committed to disrupting the distribution of dangerous narcot-

OPINION

Wins



U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith stands behind President Donald Trump during the signing of the HALT Fentanyl Act into law.



Morgan Griffith

Representative

Over the last few weeks, there have been big legislative wins for the nation.

For me, one of these wins is the signing, at last, of the HALT Fentanyl Act.

Along with Congressman Bob Latta, we began the quest in 2021 to permanently designate fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I drugs.

HALT’s language would change some over the years, as with all legislation, but it is substantially the same. It took a lot of hard work and a lot of convincing colleagues in the House and the Senate that this was the proper policy action to take.

Although the bill signed was the Senate version, I am proud to have drafted significant components of the bill and attended the White House for the bill signing.

Upon signing the bill, President Trump said HALT is “one of the more important things we will ever sign, I suspect.”

It was a big win.

You have also heard about the reconciliation wins for families and businesses on tax cuts. You have heard about the reconciliation wins on protecting our borders.

What you have not heard about are other wins in the big reconciliation bill.

One great thing is this bill prohibits federal taxpayer dollars from backdoor funding of abortions.

The provision affects only larger abortion providers. This applies even if they provide other health care services.

By providing other “health care services,” larger abortion providers have been using federal taxpayer dollars to pay a portion of their overhead costs, which helps to facilitate performing abortions.

It has been a longstanding policy that taxpayers should not be forced to pay for abortion.

Only providers that received more than

\$800,000 in federal and state monies under the Medicaid program in Fiscal Year 2023 are affected by the provision.

This does not apply to cases where an abortion is performed because of rape, incest or if the mother’s life is in jeopardy.

The initial House-passed reconciliation bill kept the provision in effect for 10 years, but the Senate reduced it to one year.

While this provision only lasts for one year, it is a step in the right direction to prohibit federal funding of abortion.

I will continue to support measures that protect the sanctity of life, such as the Hyde Amendment.

The reconciliation bill also makes significant investments in our country’s military and national defense.

We deliver critical funding to resources for integrated air and missile defense.

Funding will also go towards a “Golden Dome,” a major defense proposal pushed under Trump.

Much like the Iron Dome missile defense system employed by Israel, beginning the creation of a “Golden Dome” will help bolster security of our homeland from potential missile threats.

As I noted in a recent column on Greenland, the closest polar route between Washington DC and Moscow is over the Arctic Circle.

As the Russians continue to test their missile stockpile, a “Golden Dome” that detects and destroys potential incoming missiles from our North protects American safety and life.

Additional defense funding directs \$500 million for national security space launch infrastructure, \$2.2 billion for acceleration of hypersonic defense systems, and \$800 million for accelerated development of next-generation intercontinental ballistic missiles, among other essential funding upgrades.

We also invest in our defense shipbuilding capacity.

The Navy is in dire need of help to meet increasing demands for new ships.

As China expands aggressive naval activities in the South China Sea and tries to undermine America’s Panama Canal deal, we need to address this national security issue.

Billions of dollars from the reconciliation bill go towards confronting this crisis by revamping the manufacturing of our ships.

Steel is a major component in shipbuilding. To make the best steel, you need metallurgical coal, and Southwest Virginia has got lots.

Metallurgical coal can go a long way in providing our defense forces with the necessary steel to build ships and ensure that America’s Naval fleet is the strongest in the world.

American coal stands to benefit from the reconciliation bill as part of a larger effort to unleash American energy dominance.

To achieve dependable, affordable and secure energy, we cannot continue with policies that shun reliable forms of baseload power.

This is why in the reconciliation bill we also phase down a number of the expensive green tax credits which disincentivize coal and natural gas power plants and make us overly dependent on renewables.

There is plenty to like about the reconciliation bill.

I look forward to touting these major provisions as we put America on a path towards greatness and prosperity.

Thank You for reading
Henry County Enterprise

Be sure to like The Henry County Enterprise on Facebook

Regarding consequences

In these polarized times, it’s always fascinating to me when something happens that seemingly unites all of America.

For example, when “Tiger King” came out on Netflix in March of 2020 it seemed everyone in the country watched it because it was a reprieve from the horrible news about COVID. On the more wholesome end of the spectrum, Pokemon Go came out in the summer of 2016 and took the world by storm. Everywhere you went, families were out walking together, talking to strangers, and distractedly wandering into traffic. It was a beautiful time.

Our current uniting cultural moment, of course, is the Astronomer CEO getting caught cheating on his wife at the Coldplay concert.

If you somehow missed it, last week at a Coldplay concert in Massachusetts, a “Kiss Cam” landed on a silver-haired gentleman canoodling with a lady. When they realized they were being broadcast on the big screen, the lady turned away and hid her face while the guy crouched to the ground and crawled out of frame.

The internet quickly discovered that the gentleman in question was the CEO of a software company called Astronomer, the lady was the head of Astronomer’s Human Resources Department, they are both married, and it ain’t to each other.

The incident quickly went viral nationwide. Everyone was talking about it. Parodies began popping up, including my personal favorite in which the Phillie Phanatic got caught on the Kiss Cam at a Phillies game cuddling with a second bewigged Phanatic.

The public scrutiny became so severe that the dude ended up stepping down as CEO of Astronomer. This struck me as a slight overreaction since cheating on your wife doesn’t necessarily mean you’re bad at your job (for example, JFK was one of our finest presidents). However, the people were out for blood and the company had to do something.

Why did this incident go viral? Why were so many people so deeply invested? Is it just that we all love tawdry drama?

I think there’s more to it. I think that if the couple caught on the Kiss Cam had been a couple of working stiffs, this whole story would have been largely ignored.

Put simply, I think the American people are just absolutely starved to see a wealthy man experience a consequence.

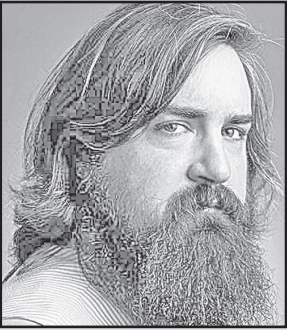
Our politicians line their pockets with corporate money and flagrantly break the law, and they don’t even get a slap on the wrist. Elon Musk was allowed to dismantle key elements of our government just because he’s a multi-billionaire. P. Diddy was cleared of sex trafficking charges.

And then there’s President Donald Trump, who has seemingly broken every law of God and man and been rewarded for it. Sure, some of his most fervent supporters are finally starting to question Trump’s 15-year friendship with our nation’s most notorious child sex trafficker. Even so, it’s hard to believe that Trump’s ever going to experience the consequences of his actions. It’s never happened before; why should it happen now?

Of course, regular folks like you and me experience nothing but consequences. We even get the luxury of experiencing the consequences of other people’s actions (so long, Social Security and Medicaid!). Against that backdrop, it’s a little easier to understand why a large chunk of America laughs uproariously when a multi-millionaire CEO ruins his marriage through his own hubris — or even why people might laugh when a bunch of billionaires hop in a homemade submarine that promptly implodes.

The funny thing is that according to online sources, the former CEO of Astronomer is estimated to have a net worth of between \$20 and \$70 million. Even though I can’t begin to imagine having that kind of money, from the perspective of someone like Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, the Astronomer guy and I are both penniless hobos. Bezos is worth about \$220 billion; if the Astronomer CEO is worth \$70 million, that represents just 0.032 percent of Bezos’ overall wealth. Bezos spent this guy’s net worth just on his recent wedding.

Regardless, it’s easy to laugh when a wealthy man experiences a consequence. Fun, too! Still, I can’t help but feel we should cut this guy some slack. Given what we’ve all learned recently about the preferences of the ultra-rich, he should probably be commended for cheating on his wife with a consenting adult woman his own age.



By Ben R. Williams

Column Sponsored by: Dr. Mensink

OPINION

Honoring a man who honors others: Turner receives flag tribute



Danny Turner (left) accepts a flag flown in his honor over the U.S. Capitol, by an anonymous donor, from W.C. Fowlkes.

Danny Turner arrived planning to give away a flag, but instead, he got one. He didn't know it, but he was lured to the Sunday Afternoon Lecture at the MHC Heritage Museum by W.C. Fowlkes so that he, Danny, would be honored. But in typical Danny Turner fashion, he showed up prepared to honor someone else. If you don't know Danny personally but you know the name, then most surely, you've seen the name in connection with community service. One of the things Danny, who has served on Martinsville City Council, is known for is for having flags flown over the nation's capital in honor of local people who have served the community and/or nation in some way or another. In fact, personally speaking, he had an American flag flown over the Capitol in honor of my grandfather, Lucien Morin, a World War II veteran who served in the Pacific Theatre, and also a judge and then a public officeholder. But I know of Danny well beyond that. In my nearly 20 years as a newspaper reporter and editor, I've seen Danny at any and all public functions involving patriotism or community service. He is there usually to honor a veteran, or some veterans, especially by presenting them with flags. Now that I am the executive director of the MHC Historical Society, I come across Danny in the past – reading newspaper articles of community projects he did even as a high-schooler – and in the present, as he reaches out to me now and then for various history-related projects. At the conclusion of the latest Sunday Afternoon Lecture – the theme of which, appropriately and yet coincidentally, was Flags of America, the program presented by Scott Koebel of Woodmen of the World – W.C. Fowlkes came up to the podium.



Holly Kozelsky

Danny is “someone who’s done a lot for the community, and I’ve worked with a lot,” W.C. said. “Today was so appropriate because he does so much for the U.S. flag.” The flag in Danny’s honor was ordered by an anonymous citizen who asked W.C. to present it, because for years W.C. and Danny have worked together to help and honor veterans. That includes going to Arlington National Cemetery to take pictures of every grave of everyone from Martinsville and Henry County who is buried in Arlington, and sending those pictures to family members of those buried. With almost half a million graves and the only way to get around is by walking, that is quite an endeavor the patriotic pair go through. They also started the local version of Wreaths Across America, laying wreaths at local graves of veterans. Danny came to the podium. W.C. held out a flag and a certificate that came with it. W.C. read the certificate: “This is to certify that the accompanying flag was flown over the United States Capitol. The flag was flown at the request of the Honorable H. Morgan Griffith, member of Congress, to honor Danny Turner, a true patriot and servant of Martinsville and surrounding communities, whose lifelong contributions are appreciated by his many fans and friends as well as by those who reap the benefits of his works without knowing he was responsible.” Turner, adorned in a navy blue shirt with bold red and white stripes, and a U.S. flag patch by the lapel, accepted the flag, saying, “I ap-

preciate this. I was wanting to suggest that if anybody wanted to give me something for Christmas – well, I had ordered 42 flags, I think. Mr. and Mrs. King were the 41st,” referring to Dr. Mervyn and Mrs. Virginia King, the benefactors of the expansion of the MHC Heritage Museum, and seated there in the audience during the presentation to Danny. “Congressmen Goode was the 42nd.” Goode’s was the flag Danny had brought with him to present at the program. “I’ve had a flag flown over the Virginia Capitol, but this indeed will be the honored flag in my house,” he said. That flag for Danny Turner was ordered by a random, anonymous citizen who said his or her feelings of appreciation toward Danny represent those of the community at large. That citizen asked W.C. to do the presentation from having recognized that W.C. and Danny do so many projects together. Any of us can order a flag to be flown over the Capitol to honor anyone. What a great gift for Christmas or Veterans Day! Just look up “Flag Order Form Honorable H. Morgan Griffith” or go to <https://flagorder.house.gov/FlagOrder.aspx?ssdd=VA09>. You write your own message to go on the certificate. Prices range from \$24 to \$34, with another \$10 or \$20 shipping charges. Hats off to public servants such as Danny Turner, W.C. Fowlkes, and others who do so much for our community such as Curtis Millner, and many more. Let us not take them for granted but rather appreciate their good works.

Duffer to lead Henry County Public Safety

Tim Duffer, a veteran emergency management professional with more than 30 years of experience, will become Henry County’s new director of public safety effective Aug. 1. He will succeed Matt Tatum, who is retiring July 31. Duffer currently serves as deputy fire chief for the Danville Fire Department, where he oversees the 911 communications center and manages accreditation. He has led federal grant efforts totaling over \$1.5 million, modernized response systems, and played a key role in disaster recovery following Tropical Storm Michael. “We are excited to welcome Tim to our leadership team,” said County Administrator Dale Wagoner. “His depth of experience in emergency response, public safety infrastructure, and strategic planning make him exceptionally well-suited to carry forward the strong legacy of service that Director Tatum leaves behind.” Duffer has also led



Tim Duffer, who currently serves as deputy fire chief in Danville, will begin his new role as Henry County’s public safety director on Aug. 1.

Regional One EMS, serving as its director and chief, while growing the agency’s workforce threefold, implementing 24/7 communications capabilities, and positioning the organization for acquisition through service innovation. In addition to his professional accomplishments, Duffer has a long record of volunteer service, including his time as Fire Chief of Blairs Volunteer Fire and Rescue. He also served on regional boards and committees supporting emergency protocols and legislative advancements. He holds a master’s degree in emergency management from Walden University and a bachelor’s degree in fire protection administration from Eastern Kentucky University. “I am honored to serve Henry County in this role,” Duffer said. “Public safety is about more than emergency response. It’s about collaboration, preparedness, and community trust.”

WB Alloys establishes first U.S. production facility in Danville

UK-based WB Alloys is investing \$6.6 million to expand their operations and open production in Virginia, Gov. Glenn Youngkin recently announced. The Danville facility will specialize in wire alloy production for the Navy and Department of Defense. The project will create 30 jobs. “We are proud that WB Alloys has chosen Virginia for its first U.S. production facility,” said Youngkin. “Their decision to establish operations here not only speaks to the strength of our workforce and business climate but also reflects Virginia’s growing leadership in advanced manufacturing.” “WB Alloys is proud to establish our U.S. base of operations in Danville, Virginia, reinforcing our global manufacturing footprint and commitment to the American market,” said WB USA President & WB Alloy Group Managing Director Paul Houston. “This strategic expansion will enable us to further develop and localize key production lines to serve both commercial and defense sectors across the United States.” Founded in 1974 and headquartered in the United Kingdom, WB Alloys specializes in the manufacturing of high-performance alloy wire for welding wire-based metal 3D printed components. In addition to consumables, they design and produce advanced closed-loop weld monitoring systems and WAAM/DED additive manufacturing equipment. WB Alloys supplies FasTech, a leading 3D metal printing operation located in the City of Danville. Their initial U.S. operations will begin in a 10,000-square-foot facility with plans to scale up to 50,000 square feet as they reach full production capacity. With seven existing locations across the U.K. and one in the Middle East, the Danville facility marks a key milestone in the company’s global growth strategy and strengthens their ability to support critical U.S. manufacturing initiatives. The Virginia Economic Development Partnership worked with the Danville-Pittsylvania County Regional Industrial Facility Authority, Pittsylvania County, the City of Danville, and the Southern Virginia Regional Alliance to

secure the project for Virginia. Governor Youngkin approved an \$80,000 grant from the Commonwealth’s Opportunity Fund to assist the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County with this project. “This project really shows what can happen when we all pull in the same direction,” said Danville-Pittsylvania Regional Industrial Facility Authority Chairman Lee Vogler. “It took teamwork from the local level all the way up to the state—from the City, the County, and RIFA to the Southern Virginia Regional Alliance, VEDP, and Governor Youngkin’s office. Everyone played a part in making this happen. We’re excited to welcome WB Alloys to the region and the jobs and opportunities they will bring. It’s another example of how our area is gaining a reputation for getting things done. Our comeback is just getting started. We’re building something special here, and this project is a big part of that momentum.” “Pittsylvania County is always thrilled to learn of an innovative business coming to Southside, and with it, new job opportunities for our citizens,” said Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors Chairman Robert Tucker. “WB Alloys is a welcome addition to the Cyber Park campus, where they will assist the U.S. Navy and Department of Defense, which has established its Accelerated Training in Defense Manufacturing program, as well as being a supplier to another Cyber Park tenant – FasTech. This is another win-win for the continuing partnership between Pittsylvania County and the City of Danville. The Board is especially thankful to WB Alloys for choosing our region to expand their operation.” VEDP will support WB Alloy’s job creation through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program, which provides consultative services and funding to companies creating new jobs in order to support employee recruitment and training activities. As a business incentive supporting economic development, VJIP reduces the human resource costs of new and expanding companies. VJIP is state funded, demonstrating Virginia’s commitment to enhancing job opportunities for citizens.

Crossing the Lines

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

Aerial breaks ground on Breathing Technology Center

Aerial Machine & Tool ceremoniously broke ground on its new breathing technology center on Tuesday, July 15.

Founded in 1926 and relocated to Meadows of Dan in 1988, Aerial has long provided survivability solutions—such as the Emergency Breathing System (EBS) — to military and first responder forces.

“The EBSs are essentially small scuba bottles that pilots, aircrew, and passengers fly with or ride with on the water in the event of an underwater egress emergency situation,” said Aerial president and CEO Thomas “Wheels” Weidley.

Weidley said the new center will help keep both Aerial and Patrick County at the forefront of technological development in this critical, life-saving field.

Nearly \$800,000 will be invested to design, construct, and outfit the approximately 3,600-square-foot building.

“This facility will provide purpose-built spaces and the latest technologies to not only sustain the existing EBS systems in the fleet and supplemental oxygen systems, but to design, develop, test, and prototype future solutions for our warfighters and first responders,” he said. “It will keep them safe and ensure mission success.”

Weidley said the new center also plans to offer multiple upskilling and cross-training op-



Aerial President Thomas “Wheels” Weidley discusses the company’s Emergency Breathing Systems (EBS), which are designed for military and first responder use.

portunities for Aerial’s existing workforce and create room for additional employees.

“Aerial supplies the Department of Defense and first responder communities around the country with the most innovative and effective custom-engineered solutions capable of withstanding today’s operating environments,” he said.

In addition to breathing systems, Weidley said Aerial also manufactures technically sewn products such as aviation vests, plate carriers, troop seats, parachuting equipment, and flotation collars and belts made using radio frequency welding.

Public hearing set on Dogwood Road closure

The Patrick County Board of Supervisors has scheduled a public hearing for its Sept. 8 meeting to consider closing a section of Dogwood Road in front of Hardin Reynolds Memorial School (HRMS).

The motion to move forward with the hearing passed on a 4-1 vote, with Mayo River District Supervisor Clayton Kendrick opposing.

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Resident Engineer Lisa Price-Hughes said she would present alternative safety measures for the board to consider in place of discontinuing maintenance on approximately 300 feet of Dogwood Road.

“If closing the section’s your pleasure, feel free to let me know and we can start that process,” she said. “Otherwise, we will not pursue it.”

If the board opted to pursue the closure, “we’d provide the property owner notifications and do all the advertisement and handle everything from that point,” Price-Hughes said.

Schools Superintendent Jason Wood said the school division’s facilities committee met with VDOT on May 15 to discuss safety concerns involving the intersection between the school’s main building and its gym.

“There are issues where cars may go 60 miles an hour during the school day through that intersection,” Wood said. “We’ve had multiple times where teachers had to stop students, cars



Patrick County Schools Superintendent Jason Wood spoke during the July 14 meeting.

had to slam on their brakes, and it is a dangerous intersection for students to cross as they’re approaching that stop sign.”

Wood said the school system has spent the past decade exploring ways to improve student safety at the site.

“VDOT acknowledged the concern. I know it came up before the board and there was a price tag involved, so VDOT proposed the solution of abandoning the road,” he said.

Although that proposal came at no cost to the county or the school division, Wood said school officials remain open to alternative solutions.

Following the Patrick County Board of Supervisors’ request for a legal review of both draft utility-scale solar facility ordinances, the Patrick County Planning Commission tabled choosing which ordinance to forward at its Tuesday, July 15 meeting.

Planning Commission Chairman Kurt Bozenmayer said the board’s action at its July 14 meeting “got us a little derailed.”

“At the very end of the meeting, after the executive session, the very last motion of the evening was to have the county attorney review the draft ordinances,” he said. The board passed the motion unanimously.

“That kind of threw a wrench into the plans for tonight,”



The Patrick County Planning Commission tabled a decision on which solar ordinance to recommend following board action the night before. From left to right: Kurt Bozenmayer, chairman; Sarah Wray, vice chairman; Ed Pool and Vance Agee.

Bozenmayer said. “I was hoping we would come out of this with a decision. I think, in order to not

leave this hanging, we need to go forward with a motion—even if that’s just to table activity until

we receive feedback from the attorney.”

Two drafts are under consideration: one created by Commission member Ed Pool and another by the Berkley Group, a consulting firm previously contracted by the county. Pool’s version is 42 pages long; Berkley’s is slightly more than 12.

Pool said he incorporated feedback from fellow commission members into his draft and addressed issues of federal and state law preemption.

“I tried to incorporate against federal supremacy and Richmond supremacy law, which did need some expansion and change from the draft you all worked on,” he said.

Behind the boom - volunteers power the county’s fireworks show



Front Row, (l to r), DJ Lawson, Bradley Lawless, Cody Collins, Terri Mills, Wesley Hudson, Ivan Byers, Jon Wilson, Clint Weidhaas, Austin Bryant, Joey Errichetti; Back Row L to R: Robbie Wade, Alex Pegram, Terry Tilley, Buddy Dollarhite, Steve Allen, John West, Will Vernon, Austin Errichetti, Scottie Cassell, Sr., Christopher Corbett, Karen Corbett, Jerry Woods, Randy West, Gregory Meade, Wesley Meade, Ronald Terry, Marshall Corbett. Not pictured were Brett Stovall & Brandon McAlexander.

By Chris Corbett
Patrick County Fireworks Coordinator

Every year, a few dedicated folks take time away from their families and holiday activities to help in the hard work of setting up, shooting, and taking down the annual Patrick County Fourth of July Fireworks Display at DeHart Park in Stuart. The County of Patrick, the County’s Tourism Advisory Council, and the Town of Stuart enabled us to shoot what we promised would be a show appro-

priately commemorating our Nation’s 250th Birthday. I hope that you think we delivered.

Those persons who made it happen include D.J. Lawson of Ararat Volunteer Fire Department; Ronald Terry of Meadows of Dan Volunteer Fire Department; Cody Collins, Brett Stovall, Brandon McAlexander, Joey Erichetti, Clint Weidhaas, Austin Erichetti, and Will Vernon, of Patrick Springs Volunteer Fire Department; Emergency Management Coordinator Scottie Cassell, Buddy

Dollarhite, Austin Bryant, Terri Mills, Alex Pegram, Ivan Byers, Terry Tilley, Jonathan Wilson, John West, and Wesley Hudson of Stuart Fire Department; and Jerry Woods, Greg Meade, Randy West, Wesley Meade, Marshall Corbett, Assistant Fireworks Coordinator Steve Allen, Robbie Wade, and Karen Corbett. Their safety-conscious hard work is much appreciated. Stuart Town Manager Bryce Simmons and Kenny Brady of Station 8 also rendered valuable assistance.



1-3-5-7-9



1-4-7-9:15



1-3-5-7-9



1-3-5-7-9



1-4-7-9:15

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FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

RPO

DUMELO

HELTA

♥DEWL

HALCUN

♥EAL

♥NAEW

HEWPL

♥EWO

HEPEWN

AMWAC

♥MPLA

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 BOLTIHOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Cover is missing from waiter's tray. 2. Straw is missing. 3. Exit sign is lower. 4. Back of chair is different. 5. Apron is missing. 6. Stripe is added to sleeve.

MAGIC MAZE • SHIP'S

G O L J G D A X V S P N K I F

C A X V S Q O L J H E C C A X

V T R P N L J H Y E L L A G F

D B Y X V T R N T S T O R E S

P O M K Y I G I D E S E P R S

D B Z O X N U A W R L L E B A

U T B R G C A T E D A C N Q P

O N L J S R I P N G I W T F M

D C A I Y X A A M F W A E V O

T S B R P P H C F O O O R T C

R E P O O C N O L B C K J I S

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: NAVIGATION INSTRUMENT

Bell
Biscuit
Boat
Boy

Captain
Cargo
Carpenter
Chandler

Company
Cooper
Galley
Officers

Papers
Steward
Stores

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Super Crossword

“WHERE’S THE BEEF?”

ACROSS

1 Predicaments

9 Metallic car trims

16 Sporty German cars

20 Cosmos

21 What a flushed person has

22 Uncommon

23 Start of a riddle

26 Advance, as money

27 Japanese pond fish

28 Bad with musical pitches

29 Letter-shaped girder

33 Feared fly

37 Wine barrels

38 Riddle, part 2

44 Before now

45 Indent keys

46 Poodle, e.g.

47 Org. fighting trafficking

48 Particular mag. edition

51 Letter following 36-Down

52 Supports for broken arms

55 Supersonic speed unit

57 Scissor cut

58 Fetuses-to-be as a car

60 Riddle, part 3

64 BLT offerer

65 Listen (to)

67 Post-workout discomfort

68 Swelled head

70 Queued up

72 Comedic sort

73 Like the pope

77 Trattoria rice dish

80 Wee bits

83 Riddle, part 4

85 Ottawa’s province

87 Seoul soldiers

88 “A little dab’ll —”

89 Noisy napper

91 Marina —

92 Corrosive cleanser

93 Place to input a PIN

94 Frat party dispenser

97 Language of Pakistan

98 — Fridays (restaurant)

99 End of the riddle

104 Father of Hector and Paris

107 Ready to go, as a car

108 Actor Dick Van —

109 Reaps

112 Spunk

114 Use a keypad

118 Riddle’s answer

125 Beef cut

126 Attacked with a jump

127 Refrigeration slows it down

128 Paquin of “The Piano”

129 Intertwists

130 Tinkered (with)

11 Nutrition fig.

12 Frequently, poetically

13 Lusterless photo surfaces

14 Cave sound

15 Not hidden

16 Like many white gowns

17 Features of zebras’ necks

18 Inflict, as havoc

19 Medieval menials

24 Cousin of emo

25 Joe causing no jolt

30 Itsy- —

31 Like a clock with hands

32 Giovanni of “Avatar”

34 Roush of baseball

35 Albeit, for short

36 18th Greek letter

38 Abhorred

39 Best competitive effort, slangily

40 Surprised second look

41 IRS datum

42 Like Popeye and Rambo

43 Former anesthetic

48 Apropos of

49 Knights, e.g.

50 1974 CIA spoof flick

53 Pop’s Stefani

54 Big scissors

56 “Plus” point

57 Hyundai model

59 The “R” of ERA

61 College “Eli”

62 Bracelet sites

63 Hem, e.g.

66 French spa city

69 “Nice one!”

71 Twelve p.m.

73 Key near Alt

74 Cry on a ship

75 Samsung or LG product

76 “Where — from ...”

78 Really hot

79 In the future

81 San — Padres

82 Not at all iffy

84 Made of a certain sturdy wood

86 Place for a car jack

90 — Lips Are Sealed”

93 “Bibleman” star Willie

95 Nest nugget

96 “Aw, shucks”

99 Cuban capital

100 Sight-related

101 Simple putts

102 Greek Mars

103 In fine — (doing well)

104 Big city in Penna.

105 Betray by blabbing

106 Novelist Shaw

110 Store lure

111 Subsequently

113 “You! Look over here!”

115 Calendar unit

116 Calendar unit

117 — out a living (barely scraped by)

119 H.S. transcript stat

120 & so forth

121 “The Simpsons” tavern keeper

122 Fed. cleanup group

123 DeLuise of “Silent Movie”

124 Drink a little

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

• The sun emits sound through pressure waves, but their wavelength makes it impossible to be heard by humans.

• In 1989, PepsiCo introduced a breakfast drink called Pepsi A.M., with a caffeine content that was 25% higher than a cup of coffee. Unfortunately for the beverage maker, most Pepsi consumers didn’t really care for the idea of mixing soda with breakfast.

• A laser can get trapped in water.

• The 2007 film “Ratatouille,” about the alliance between a garbage boy and a rat, spurred an uptick in adoption of the rodents. As rat expert Steve Fairburn noted, the film helped to promote the fact that “contrary to popular opinion, rats are one of the cleanest and least smelly pets you can own.”

• The Hollywood sign used to say Hollywoodland.

• Want to be a little more creative? Try taking a hot shower. The warmth increases dopamine flow, which in turn helps increase creativity.

• There is no number before 1,000 that contains the letter “a.”

• Penicillin’s original name was “mold juice.” Yes, we think the revised moniker has a much nicer ring, too.

• The average person is made up of around 56% bacteria.

• In Japanese, the word “kuchisabishii” refers to eating not when you’re hungry, but when your mouth is lonely.

• It takes 90 days for one drop of water to travel the Mississippi River.

• In the village of Brockworth, England, folks gather on every spring bank holiday to chase wheels of Double Gloucester cheese down Cooper’s Hill. First one over the finish line wins. The tradition was first recorded in 1826 but may actually be around 600 years old and is world famous.

• Popsicles were originally marketed as a health food.

Thought for the Day: “Weak people revenge. Strong people forgive. Intelligent people ignore.” — *Albert Einstein*

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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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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!

Poke

DEGUN

Piece

CLEAN

Border

ARMING

Repay

VEEGAN

TODAY’S WORD

“We’re going over to the Holloways’ tonight. You’ve got an hour to eat and dress and _____ about it.”

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City Manager

(cont. from page 1)

pay an outside firm to conduct the forensic audit.

Martinsville Mayor LC Jones said the audit will be carried out by an outside company, but the information it will be based on came from an internal investigation.

“So now, we’re going to take and hand it over,” Jones said. “I called months ago for an investigation. I asked for the attorneys to advise us. And at that time, I said attorneys and city manager to advise us on how to go about that. ... The biggest thing I heard in the public was we shouldn’t be investigating ourselves, and that is what has happened.

“So now, we’re going to take that investigation and turn it over to an outside independent auditor company to complete. In principle, I am for it 100 percent, the auditors, but I will be voting against it because to me, it’s fruit from a poisonous tree,” he said.

The motion passed by majority vote, with Jones casting the lone “no” vote.

Rawls then made a motion to place the city manager on administrative leave with pay, effective immediately.

“Again, as I mentioned in the first discussion, I am 100 percent in favor of her being placed on leave. She should have been placed on leave immediately at the beginning of this investigation,” Jones said. “But as it has been (conducted) in-house, and because it’s in-house, I am 100 percent against it. So, I think we should place her on leave but I’m against an in-house investigation. So, I’ll be voting against it.”

“I’ll clarify the record is written. It’s recorded. Y’all can make up your own mind,” Rawls said. “Hang in there, employees of Martinsville, citizens of Martinsville. We’re getting there.”

“I think this should have been done from the very beginning of the investigation, like some other things, but that’s just my peace on it,” said Council Member Rayshaun Gravely.

The motion passed in a 4-1 vote, with Jones again dissenting.

Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson then made a motion—later amended in part—to appoint Police Chief Robert Fincher as temporary acting city manager. Fincher will serve in that capacity until the next regularly scheduled council meeting.

That motion passed unani-

mously.

After the meeting, Lawson said she supported placing Ferrell-Benavides on leave because “it just needs to happen. There is an investigation going on, and sometimes when those things happen, it is the right thing to do.”

Gravely, who also supported the motion, added, “Everything in this investigation, including other individuals that’s a part of this investigation, should have been put on leave” earlier. While he could not recall the exact start date of the investigation, “every person involved should have been put on leave.”

Wednesday’s votes came after a Tuesday meeting in which the council ratified a previously negotiated pay increase for Ferrell-Benavides, and approved the minutes from a March 17 meeting.

“As the mayor indicated, there has been some confusion as to the contents of what the minutes should be,” Stephen Durbin of the Sands Anderson law firm, said Tuesday. “There was some confusion on what the actual motion was.”

“If an actual number or percentage was included in the motion, I recommend that be specified in the minutes,” Durbin said. “But if that was not included, I would recommend adopting the minutes to accurately reflect what the action was on 3/17, and then adopt a separate motion to ratify and confirm the city manager’s salary at her current rate, effective April 1.”

Lawson recalled the March 17 action as authorizing the mayor to negotiate a salary with the city manager. That motion passed 4-0, with Rawls absent.

According to Lawson, the outcome of the negotiation was that the city manager relinquished a \$10,000 vehicle and cell phone allowance, and her salary was raised to \$215,000, effective April 1. She does not receive city insurance.

“The minutes are correct as to what occurred,” Lawson said. “We had the discussion. I started to make a motion. There was some discussion that that motion was not what everyone wanted. So there was an amended ... there was a motion actually made by Council Member (Julian) Mei authorizing the mayor to negotiate with the city manager. I seconded it, and then we all voted on it.”

Durbin reiterated more clarity

was needed and again recommended splitting the decision into two motions: one to approve the March 17 minutes and another to ratify the salary agreement.

Lawson withdrew her original motion and made a new one to approve the March 17 minutes. It was seconded and opened for discussion.

“I want to be very careful because I wasn’t there,” Rawls said. “One of the reasons I belabor the time of open session is not, at least not solely, because I’m obnoxious, but part of the reason we’re in this boat” is because many people didn’t seem to know about the public meeting.

Rawls pointed out that the agenda did not include the word “open” and that there was no clearly announced open session.

“No time, no date, no media, discrepancy and argument over what actually occurred, and, in this case, I invoke the spirit of the law. I get legally, you could declare it an open session as long as it’s properly announced at 10 a.m., go to closed session for 12 hours and pop back out ... maybe. I would fight that, but in this particular case, there was no open session announced at all. None. The word ‘open’ did not appear on the agenda.

“There was no open session. So, I’ve got that concern,” he said. “I have the other concern. I don’t know the appropriate way to do this ... I don’t think our deputy clerk wrote those minutes, and I don’t know who did.”

He asked Deputy Clerk Peyton Nibblett whether he authored the minutes and if they reflected his memory. Nibblett responded yes to both.

“Your concerns about the open session item,” Durbin said, “go to whether ... and we can have a discussion on that at another time and place, about the notice requirements. I think that is a separate question from what’s on the floor tonight, which is just to approve whatever a majority of council determines happened at that meeting.”

The minutes were approved in a 3-1-1 vote, with Jones, Lawson, and Rayshaun Gravely voting in favor, Rawls abstaining,

and Mei voting against.

Durbin then recommended a second motion to ratify and confirm the city manager’s salary agreement.

Lawson moved to ratify that the city manager relinquished a \$10,000 car and phone allowance, does not receive city insurance, and now receives a \$215,000 salary effective April 1.

Rawls objected to the wording. “I don’t see where council actually increased deferred compensation,” he said. “More important, we say we took away the car allowance, but we offered a car. That’s a little bit misleading. ... I just do not want to mislead citizens while I’m sitting up here,” he said.

“If that is the case, then I think that motion should be amended to accurately reflect that,” Durbin said.

“I will amend the motion to what Councilman Rawls just said,” Lawson responded.

Jones said the city manager had been receiving a monthly vehicle stipend and that assigning her a take-home vehicle made sense now that the city has a fleet of Enterprise vehicles.

Mei said he had “great reservations” about the minutes of the March 17 meeting, but declined to elaborate due to its closed-session nature.

“The first draft version (of the minutes) resembles NOTHING like the current one,” he said. “I really believe in closed sessions, so I can’t go into detail ... I gotta feel the amended minutes were made to make it look like this was somehow orchestrated by me.”

Mei also alluded to a “recent development” concerning the city manager that he could not discuss publicly.

The final vote to ratify the compensation package was 3-2, with Gravely, Lawson, and Jones in favor, and Rawls and Mei opposed.

The Tuesday meeting included two public hearings: a rezoning request and the proposed abandonment of a street.

Wayne Draper was appointed to the Board of Appeals; Brandon Martin was appointed to the Planning Commission.

Lifesaver

(cont. from page 1)



Project Lifesaver equipment.

can be worn around the arm, emit a signal that law enforcement can track using handheld equipment. The receiver emits a beep that grows louder when pointed in the correct direction, guiding officers to the missing person.

Participants are asked to check the battery daily. If the battery dies or needs to be changed, officers can visit the home to assist.

“We can help each other because we have the same equipment,” said Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper, noting the program is nationwide. “The trackers can be located by any participating police agency as long as the frequency is known.”

Draper said the program was well-received locally and emphasized the cooperative nature of the effort.

“It’s been a real positive program in the city and the county. And we’ve been fortunate enough to share resources together, even though the county didn’t actually have the program. Every time we responded to the county, their deputies came to help us,” he said.

“The Harvest Foundation started our program in 2002. They gave us some seed money,” Draper said, adding that the program remains

free to the community. Families are asked to pay only the \$10 battery replacement cost.

“This partnership is about more than technology,” the agencies said in a joint statement. “It’s about compassion, service, and protecting the most vulnerable members of our community,” Davis added. “We just feel like it’s our duty to serve this community in this capacity.”

Project Lifesaver is available at no cost to families in either locality. County residents can enroll by visiting the Adult Detention Center at 800 DuPont Road in Martinsville. City residents can sign up at the Martinsville City Sheriff’s Office at 13 South Moss Street.

To help families understand how the program works, an informational video is available online. The departments encourage those who may benefit to reach out.

“When we work together, our community is stronger,” the agencies said in a joint statement. “The city has had several Project Lifesaver stories, and we hope to continue this,” Davis said.

Currently, about 33 people are enrolled in the program.

Authorities seek information in Sunset Road shooting

The Henry County Sheriff’s Office responded to a report of shots fired at 3378 Sunset Road in Collinsville, around 5:09 a.m. on July 23.

Deputies arrived at the scene at 5:14 a.m. and observed multiple doors to the residence open, with visible blood inside. A safety sweep of the home revealed multiple spent shell casings and signs of forced entry. The residence was unoccupied at the time.

At 5:17 a.m., SOVAH Health Emergency Department contacted the Sheriff’s Office to report a gunshot victim had arrived at the hospital. The individual, identified as Antony Hagwood, a resident of 3378 Sunset Road, had sustained a single gunshot wound to the upper torso. His injury was determined to be non-life-threatening.

Preliminary investigation indicates that two unidentified suspects forcibly entered Hagwood’s residence and, upon confronting him, began firing. Hagwood was struck once and returned fire before fleeing the scene and seeking medical attention.

A search warrant was obtained for the residence at 3378 Sunset Road. During the search, deputies discovered more than 10 pounds of marijuana, a quantity of prescription pills, narcotics packaging materials, multiple firearms — including one confirmed as stolen, an undisclosed amount of U.S. currency and money counting machines.

A second search warrant was executed on the vehicle used to transport Hagwood to the hospital. Inside, deputies recovered an additional firearm and a quantity of marijuana.

The suspects involved in the home invasion and shooting remain unidentified. The investigation is active and ongoing.

Anyone with information related to this incident is encouraged to contact the Henry County Sheriff’s Office at (276) 638-8751 or CrimeStoppers at 63-CRIME (632-7463).

The CrimeStoppers program offers rewards of up to \$2,500 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of individuals involved in criminal activity. Callers may remain anonymous.

email us
DHALL@THEENTERPRISE.NET

See more at www.henrycountyenterprise.com

Cobler

(cont. from page 1)

a grant application process for research proposals and innovative community-based rehabilitation programs.

Cobler said she will continue to serve on the board of supervisors while also fulfilling her duties with VACNL.

“I can do some things virtually and go to Richmond some, I definitely will choose to do both. It’s a once a month commitment,” she said.

Cobler said she was recommended for the role by a Virginia legislator, and ultimately appointed by Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

“I was asked to submit my resume, and then after that they called. So, they do have all of my information. I’ve served five governors, but I haven’t served Governor Youngkin because I knew I was going to run for this office (board of supervisors), so I was concentrating more on this,” she said.

Cobler said she’s glad and thrilled to now serve Youngkin, even though his term is nearing its end.

“Then of course it will last for the next governor as well, but I feel it’s the least I could do for the Commonwealth. Like I said, I have served in capacities before, but not with him” and not in this position, she said.

Cobler said her goal in the role is to help others facing experiences similar to her own.

“To accomplish it, it’s important work because I’ve been there and I know what people and their families are going through when they have had a traumatic injury,” she said.

Outside of the appointment, Cobler is involved with Wheel Love, a spinal cord injury support group based in Southwest Virginia. She has also done peer support and worked with trauma units.

“Specifically, also as Miss Wheelchair Virginia I was really involved and also as a CEO of the Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center Foundation in traveling statewide to hospitals to acute cares, and I do get calls to help people who have sustained an injury,” she said.

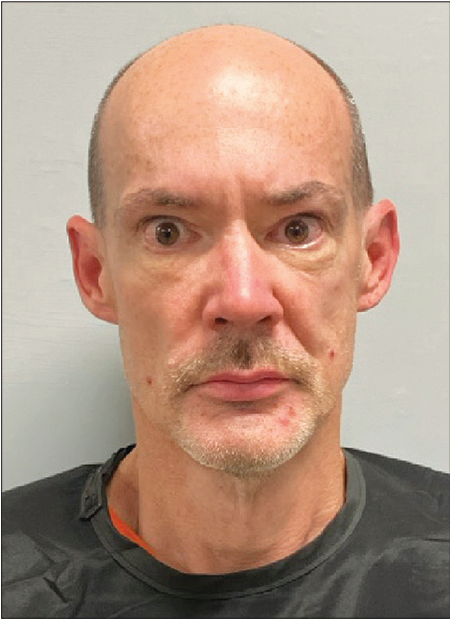
Cobler also provides consultations for the Disability Rights and Resource Center as part of her job.

“I will be a professional individual who is representing people who have had spinal cord injuries. Then as a local elected official, I can bring not only my personal experience, but all the professional stuff, and to accomplish this is just to work on the advisory board team,” she said.

Cobler said the board includes doctors such as neurologists and neurosurgeons.

“One I think is from VCU (Virginia Commonwealth University), so I think I’ll fit in nicely and just bring my experience to the team,” she said.

Drug investigation leads to arrests, vehicle seizure



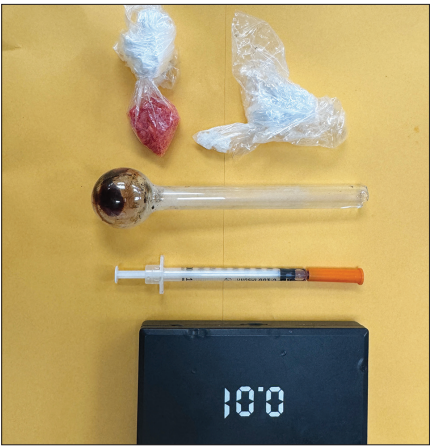
Robert Carrington Brough



Javon Lamar Manns



Items seized from a home on Maple Drive.



Items seized during traffic stop.

Henry County Sheriff’s Office deputies on July 18 responded to an anonymous tip regarding heavy vehicle and pedestrian traffic at 325 Maple Drive, Apartment 9.

Upon arrival, deputies observed multiple vehicles entering the apartment complex and noted suspicious behavior indicative of possible narcotics activity. Shortly thereafter, deputies conducted a traffic stop on a separate vehicle exiting the complex for a registration violation.

The vehicle was occupied by multiple individuals, according to the release. During the stop, deputies observed inconsistencies in statements made by the driver and passengers. A subsequent search of the vehicle and its occupants resulted in the discovery of illegal substances and drug-related paraphernalia.

Based on the information obtained during the stop, deputies obtained and served a search warrant for 325 Maple Drive, Apartment 9. At the time of the search, the residence was occupied by Javon Lamar Manns, Robert Carrington Brough, and a third individual. The third individual was found to have no outstanding warrants and was released at the scene.

When executing the search warrant, deputies seized suspected methamphetamine and cocaine, along with digital scales, packaging materials, multiple cellular devices, and a quantity of U.S. currency. All items of evidence will be submitted to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science for analysis. Additionally, a 2010 Audi sedan was seized as part of the investigation.

As a result of this investigation, the following individuals were taken into custody:

Manns was charged with possession of methamphetamine with intent to distribute and possession of cocaine with intent to distribute. He was held with No Bond.

Brough was charged with maintaining a common nuisance. He received a \$3,500 secured bond.

The Henry County Sheriff’s Office remains committed to investigating and disrupting illegal drug activity in our communities. Anyone with information regarding narcotics activity is encouraged to contact the Henry County Sheriff’s Office at (276) 638-8751 or submit tips anonymously through the Crime Stoppers program at 63-CRIME (632-7463). Crime Stoppers offers rewards of up to \$2,500 for information leading to an arrest and conviction.



Before: Kudzu surrounded the former Peanuts building, obscuring it from view.



After: Ray Reynolds used his own equipment to clear the overgrowth, making the building and parking lot fully visible.

Reynolds cleans up former “Peanuts” property

By Taylor Boyd

Blackberry District Board of Supervisors candidate Ray Reynolds led a recent cleanup effort at the site of the former “Peanuts” business, a once multi-use property that housed a convenience store, garage, hair salon, and turkey shoot.

Reynolds, who is running against longtime incumbent and current chairman Jim Adams, said he hopes the

cleanup will inspire pride and help revive local tourism. He and five crew members spent four hours removing overgrown kudzu and clearing the parking lot using his own equipment.

He said the private property owner supported the effort but noted development is limited by the lack of access to public water or sewer.

“I want people to be proud to live in Blackberry,” Reynolds said.

State Fair seeks nominations for farmers who are military veterans

The State Fair of Virginia and Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. have partnered to offer a brand-new Virginia Veteran Farmer Recognition Award.

The inaugural award will honor the invaluable contributions of veterans who have transitioned into farming or paused and returned to farming after serving in the military.

“This contest seeks to celebrate veterans’ resilience, dedication and the unique perspectives they bring to agriculture,” explained Marlene Jolliffe, State Fair executive director. “The State Fair of Virginia Veteran Farmer Recognition Award is an opportunity to honor the stories of veterans who have found purpose and fulfillment in farming. By sharing their experiences, we can inspire others and foster a greater understanding of the challenges and triumphs faced by those who have served our country.”

Nominations can be made by family and friends, or veterans can nominate themselves. Nomination questions will reflect on the experiences of veterans who have embraced farming as a second career or who paused their

farming to serve in the military and then returned to it. Essays should focus on challenges faced during the transition from military to civilian life; the lessons learned through farming; and the impact of agriculture on their personal and community well-being.

The contest is open to all Virginia veterans who are currently engaged in farming. Nomination forms can be found here.

The deadline to nominate a veteran farmer is Sept. 10. Three winners will be selected and recognized on Thursday, Oct. 2, at a special ceremony held during the State Fair.

The 2025 State Fair of Virginia will run from Sept. 26 through Oct. 5. Information is available at StateFairVa.org.

The State Fair is held each fall at its permanent home at The Meadow Event Park in Caroline County and attracts 250,000 fairgoers. In 2024, the fair was among 150 diverse events that drew more than 545,235 visitors to The Meadow. The venue had an overall regional economic impact of \$41.5 million.

Drowning prevention tips to stay afloat this summer

In Virginia, nearly 500 people have accidentally drowned over the last five years. In fact, drowning is a leading cause of death in children. Whether you are celebrating the holiday weekend at the pool, the beach, the river or the lake, West Piedmont Health District (WPHD) offers drowning prevention tips to keep you healthy and safe while swimming.

“We want all residents of our community to enjoy the summer safely, especially all water recreational activities,” said WPHD Health Director Penny Hall, MAHS. We encourage everyone to ensure that they are swimming in safe places and follow drowning prevention tips, and to actively supervise children.”

Drowning often occurs quickly and silently. Unlike the movies, drowning doesn’t usually involve thrashing and shouting. The signs of drowning are more subtle and last only 20-60 seconds before the person goes under.

West Piedmont Health District offers these preventions tips:

*Provide active supervision for all children in the water. A responsible adult should watch children closely when they are in or around water.

Adults should not be distracted or engaged in other activities, even if lifeguards are present. For preschool-aged children, “touch supervision” is recommended, where the supervising adult is within arm’s reach of the child.

*Learn to swim. Knowing how to swim can reduce the risk of drowning.

*Learn CPR. Make sure we know what to do if someone needs help in the water.

*Always swim with a buddy. Never swim alone.

*Avoid swimming after dark. Signs of drowning are harder to see.

*Watch for swimming hazards like rip currents and rough waters.

*Observe any advisories and listen to lifeguards.

*“Floaties,” arm bands, water wings are toys, not safety devices. When these toys are in use, the caregiver must still provide active supervision. Wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets.

*Make sure pools have the proper safety features in place to help reduce the risk of injury.

Stay vigilant this summer. Visit swimhealthyva.com for more information.

Email submissions@theenterprise.net

Community members donate food, share concerns at municipal building



Callie Heitala manned the donations table. Items were collected during the event for the Community Storehouse.

By Jessica Dillon

A group of local residents gathered Wednesday, July 16, outside the Martinsville municipal building to hold a food drive and voice concerns about a range of political and social issues.

The event, which included signs, speeches and a donation table, was organized by community members including Mindy Wegener. Donations benefited the Community Storehouse.

Callie Heitala, public information officer for Martinsville City Schools, and Joe Keiper, executive director of the Virginia Museum of Natural History, helped staff the donation table.

Delegate candidates Melody Cartwright, running in District 48 against Republican incumbent Eric Phillips, and Adam Murphy, running in District 9 against incumbent GOP Wren Williams in 2026, were both present.

“Today, our community, state, and nation are being aggressively attacked on many levels. And I am ready and willing to take on this fight to the state level,” said Cartwright. “The Trump administration has pissed me off now. They are going against our children, dismantling our education and healthcare systems, taking away food secu-

rity for kids, and taking away Medicaid for the working poor.”

Local horror author Mark Rainey said his main concerns are healthcare and science, and that his family is directly affected.

“I’m struggling with healthcare for my wife. So many people stand to lose a lot more,” Rainey said. “The current political climate is scarier than anything I could write.”

Lynn Pedersen, secretary of the Martinsville-Henry County Democratic Committee, spoke about how recent policies have impacted her family.

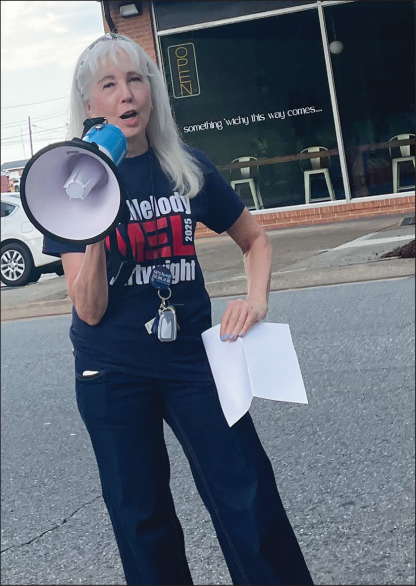
“Every single member of my family is being affected by this administration,” Pedersen said, citing concerns for her transgender granddaughter, her daughters affected by abortion restrictions, and a son-in-law whose job is at risk.

She also voiced frustration over cuts to weather reporting services. “I know for a matter of fact their funds got frozen,” she said.

“This is not about fraud and abuse. It’s about abuse—from the current administration and the one percent,” said Cartwright. Murphy echoed the call for civic engagement, saying, “Just



Local author Mark Rainey speaks about healthcare concerns affecting his family.



Delegate candidate Melody Cartwright addresses the crowd outside the city municipal building.



Lynn Pedersen speaks about how recent policies have impacted her family.

like John Lewis, let’s carry that spirit forward with us. Let’s build some good trouble today, tomorrow, and every day forward.”

Heitala said the food drive exceeded expectations, with essential items like milk, butter and eggs donated.

“We did this last time at the No Kings Rally, and it was overwhelming—the other people who contributed food or didn’t know and wanted to bring something,” she said. “Our coolers are already filled up with important items that they don’t usually have.”

County

(cont. from page 1)



The Ridgeway Ruritan Club was recognized for its 75th anniversary by the Henry County Board of Supervisors.



Writers, producers, and actors Michal Sinnott (left) and Lexi Graboski (right) discussed their feature film YOYOs, which will be shot in Henry County, as Assistant County Administrator JR Powell looks on.

ing, Tatum was praised for his leadership in adapting the county’s emergency services to meet changing community needs, especially as the number of active volunteers declined.

“When Matt became director, the system looked very different than it does today,” said County Administrator Dale Wagoner. “Volunteerism, which once shouldered the bulk of emergency response, was on the decline. Matt helped us navigate this challenge by fortifying our career service model to meet growing call volumes without compromising service quality.”

Under Tatum’s leadership, the department expanded staffing, improved training, mod-

ernized equipment and shifted from a volunteer-based model to a career-driven emergency response system.

The department responded to 2,989 EMS calls in 2015. That number more than doubled to 7,162 by 2024. Fire assist calls also rose during that time, from 350 to 1,426. EMS assist calls, in which county staff support volunteer agencies, declined to zero in 2024 following a change in dispatch protocols. Based on Tatum’s recommendation, Henry County began dispatching the nearest available ambulance, regardless of district, to improve response times.

The department’s annual budget grew from \$1.5 million in fiscal year

2015 to more than \$5.5 million this year to support the expansion.

Tatum was also credited with helping the department navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, during which he managed increased call volumes and implemented evolving public health protocols. He also led the county’s response to major emergencies, ensured compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and helped plan for large events such as the county fair and NASCAR races.

Tatum played a key role in workforce development, helping to establish the Blue Ridge Fire & EMS Academy and a high school EMS program that is scheduled to relaunch next year. He also supported Patrick & Henry Community College in obtaining accreditation to offer EMS certification courses.

“On behalf of the Board of Supervisors and the citizens of Henry County, I want to extend our sincere gratitude to Matt Tatum for his decades of dedicated service,” said Board Chairman Jim Adams. “His commitment to public safety,



Many of Tatum’s relatives attended the meeting.

his steady leadership through times of change, and his tireless efforts to protect and serve this community have left a lasting mark. We thank him for his service and wish him the very best in his well-earned retirement.”

In other matters, the board:

- Heard from residents Michael Tipton and David Craig about water drainage issues in the Joseph Martin Highway and Blackberry District areas.
- Approved several appropriations, including:
 - \$25,223 in State Asset Forfeiture funds for uniform patches and community engagement.
 - \$30,000 in state funds to purchase wellness equipment for the Sheriff’s Office.
 - \$23,597 in State Asset Forfeiture funds for

travel and shelving for the Commonwealth’s Attorney’s office.

- \$30,797 from the contingency fund to help Fieldale-Collinsville Rescue Squad buy two 12-lead heart monitors.
- Conducted two public hearings, and:
 - Approved abandoning a discontinued section of Route 57.
 - Approved rezoning 0.22 acres in the Reed Creek District from Commercial B-1 to Neighborhood Commercial B-2.
- Reappointed Mike Ward to the Roanoke River Basin Association for a one-year term.
- Authorized the County Attorney and County Administrator to execute documents related to a settlement with Henry Schein, Inc., and other entities.
- Approved a resolution recognizing the

75th anniversary of the Ridgeway Ruritan Club.

- Approved the 2025 Regional Solid Waste Management Plan.
- Approved the consent agenda and heard monthly updates on delinquent tax collection.
- Heard from Michael Sinnott and Lexi Graboski, writers and actors of the feature film YOYOs, which is being filmed in Henry County.
- Heard an introduction from new West Piedmont Health District Director Penny Hall.
- Heard from Pam Coblentz, of the Reed Creek District, about her appointment to the Virginia Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative Advisory Board.
- Received an update on general highway matters from VDOT Resident Engineer Lisa Price-Hughes.

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Well-wishers pack venue for Williams’ 75th



Family and friends looked on as Charles Williams blew out his birthday candles.



Debra Buchanan said she used a military photo of Williams and Elvis Presley on top of the cake. There is a marked resemblance in the two men.



Dozens of people attended Charles Williams’ 75th birthday party.

By Taylor Boyd
More than 200 people attended and offered well wishes to Charles Williams at his 75th birthday party on Saturday, July 19. Williams, of Williams Auction Co. LLC, is also the partner of Debra Buchanan, the Horsepasture District representative on the Henry County Board of Supervisors. Guests included family, friends, community members, county leaders, and even former U.S. Rep. Virgil Goode.

During the celebration, a 41-minute tribute video was played in which Williams, Buchanan, and their family members spoke about Williams and his relationship with Buchanan. While she said it’s her job as a sister not to compliment him too much, Peggie Parsons Powell, Buchanan’s sister, said Williams has many admirable qualities. “The first thing is he is a God-fearing man, that is a given. He is patriotic, he is honest, he is caring, he will do anything for people if it’s honest and within reason, he looks af-

ter his community, he looks after his family,” she said in the video. Williams said he gives thanks to God for each day. “You know, sometimes people don’t understand or they’ll forget — but when that sun comes up in the morning and that sun goes down, and then you look at what the different seasons and everything getting green and bloom and stuff like that — I thank God for every day I get to see that,” Williams said. The video can be viewed on Star News TV’s YouTube channel or Facebook page.

This is your community.

Bring your *idea*. Bring your *people*. Bring your **hope**.



**project
hope**

**Applications due by
August 1.**

theharvestfoundation.org/project-hope