

## Council terminates city manager's contract; ensures charter compliance

By Taylor Boyd and Jessica Dillon

To conform with the city's charter, the Martinsville City Council approved a resolution to formalize the termination of former City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides at its Tuesday, August 12 meeting.

To meet the requirements under Chapter 5, Section 1 of the charter, the council directed the city attorney to provide Ferrell-Benavides, who has been on administrative leave since July 22, with written notice detailing the specific reasons for her removal.

In accordance with the charter, Ferrell-Benavides will be suspended immediately and relieved of all duties and authorized authority as city manager pending the



The Martinsville City Council voted to terminate City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides' contract in a 4-1 vote, and on Tuesday ensured her termination followed charter procedures with a 3-2 vote. Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson and Mayor LC Jones are pictured.

effective date of her removal. Her termination will be final 60 days from the date of written notice, during which she will continue to be paid by the city.

The motion was approved with a 3-2 vote. Mayor LC Jones and Council Member Rayshaun Gravely were

the dissenting votes. The council also reaffirmed Ferrell-Benavides' contract termination at the meeting.

Before voting, Jones expressed his opposition to the motion.

"Last week we received information, we had about two hours to deliberate on the information and we

came out and made a decision. I opposed it then in principle as I've said I would rather for this whole investigation to be a stated investigation, not us investigating ourselves," he said.

Jones said he believes the council rushed the termination on August 7, when Ferrell-Benavides was already on leave.

"We could have waited, deliberated another week or so on this. We still have the audit out there somewhere, if the end results are going to be the end results, it can be what it was going to be. But because we didn't wait, we're now covering our tracks and doubling back to fix the issue that we did last week," he said.

Council Member Aaron Rawls said the (See Terminates p. 2)



Police Chief Rob Fincher was named interim city manager during the Aug. 12 Martinsville City Council meeting. Fincher, right, is pictured at the meeting beside Peyton Nibblett, clerk of the council.

## Fincher named interim city manager in unanimous vote

By Taylor Boyd

Police Chief Rob Fincher was named Martinsville's interim city manager during the Tuesday, Aug. 12, city council meeting.

His appointment was approved on a 5-0 vote.

Fincher thanked the council for allowing him to continue serving the community he loves.

"I know that regardless of how we've reached this point, there is an element of trust that (See Fincher p. 2)



Promotional images from the YOYOS website feature Graboski, Reiss, and Sinnott.

## Indie film on political family rifts wraps shooting in Henry County

By Jessica Dillon

Production is now wrapping up on a movie filmed in Henry County. "YOYOS" (You're On Your Own), focuses on political divisions within families. The project raised \$50,130 through crowdfunding.

The masterminds behind the film, Lexi Graboski and Michal Sinnott, worked to bring the vision to life. The drama-comedy follows liberal sisters Dinah and Abigail,

who return to their childhood home in rural Virginia after a long estrangement to pay respects to their supposedly dying conservative father—only to be roped into running the survivalist camp for kids that their parents founded after the sisters left.

Inspired by films such as "Little Miss Sunshine," "Troop Beverly Hills," "Captain Fantastic," and (See Indie p. 2)

## Hashmi pitches green jobs, healthcare support in Martinsville campaign visit



Sen. Ghazala Hashmi addressed constituents in Martinsville.

By Jessica Dillon

Sen. Ghazala Hashmi visited Martinsville this week, delivering an introductory

speech, meeting with voters, and stopping at Be Wicked Diner.

Hashmi, who represents Virginia's 15th

Senate District, is running for lieutenant governor on the Democratic ticket with a platform focused on education.

Born in India, she moved to the United States at age 4 with her brother and mother. She is the first Muslim and the first South Asian American to serve in the Virginia Senate. Hashmi earned a bachelor's degree with honors from Georgia Southern University and a doctorate in American literature from Emory University in Atlanta.

"She worked as an educator and an academic administrator for 25 years before running for office," said District 48 House (See Hashmi p. 5)

## Bikers for Babies ride returns to raise funds for pregnancy center

By Jessica Dillon

Patrick Rusmisl is once again helping organize Bikers for Babies, an annual event that raises donations for the Pregnancy Care Center of MHC. The Aug. 23 ride marks the 14th year of the event that lines up bikers for a donation-based road trip that ends with a barbecue dinner.

All vehicles are welcome to participate in the event that will be held in the Broad Street Parking Lot in Martinsville. Registration begins at 10 a.m., and the 55-mile ride — from Martinsville to Sontag to Ridgeway — gets underway at noon.

"We're sitting on nearly \$1,000 worth of tattoo gift certificates right now," Rusmisl said. "That's unique." Three tattoo shops have donated to the cause: Luna Moth in Collinsville, Ancient Art in Roanoke, and Winston Avenue Social Club, also in Roanoke.

"I found out about Winston Avenue because the owner's dad is one of the truck drivers I use for work," he said. "We were just talking, and he goes, 'Yeah, my son coached Patrick Paul,' and I said, 'Okay, that makes sense now.' Ancient Art, I pass it every day on my way home. It's got a big glass front, clear as day. So, one day I just stopped and asked."

Other changes this year include the addition of a silent auction and raffles. "We've always done live auctions and door prizes, but we wanted to try something new."

Registration this time is free, with donations encouraged instead. "The new director has done events without a registration fee before, and she said people tend to give more when they don't feel obligated," he said. "Instead of handing you a twenty and asking for fifteen back, they just say, 'Keep it.'"

(See Biker p. 11)

## Smith River Fest returns Aug. 23 with activities and river fun

By Taylor Boyd

The 17th annual Smith River Fest will be held Saturday, Aug. 23, at the Monogram Foods Smith River Sports Complex.

Sponsored by Sovah Health — Martinsville, the event runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission and parking are free.

Henry County Parks and Recreation Director Roger Adams said the festival offers activities for all ages, most are free of charge.

"For people seeking adventure, we have the Helgramite Hustle Mud Run and the Smith River Boat Race," Adams said. "We're also offering free river tubing all day — you can check out a tube and life jacket and float in the Smith River. We'll have free river shuttles all day so you can canoe or kayak without worrying about transportation."

Children can enjoy a large petting zoo, a rock climbing wall, and bounce houses.

"We also have a demo pool where, if you're new to boating, you can try out a canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddleboard," Adams said.

Other attractions include hammock villages for relaxing and cooling off, a casting pool for fly-fishing instruction, and a kid's cycle station with bikes and obstacle courses. Food trucks, the Joseph Young Magic Show, live afternoon music, and a beer garden will also be featured.

Adams said the event typically attracts more than 2,000 attendees.

"We've been having really good attendance over the last four years. We added some new activities a few years ago, so turnout has been strong," he said. "It's just a great day to celebrate outdoor recreation and the Smith River in Henry County."

Free river tubing, the magic show, and the vendor marketplace are among the

most popular attractions, Adams said.

Space remains available for vendors. The \$30 fee includes booth space, and Adams encourages early registration.

"They need to register as soon as they can because we're doing all the vendor maps and everything," he said. "The closer we get to the festival, we do sell out of spots."

For more information, visit [www.henrycountyva.gov/336/Entertainment](http://www.henrycountyva.gov/336/Entertainment).

VISIT  
[HTTP://WWW.HENRYCOUNTYENTERPRISE.COM](http://www.henrycountyenterprise.com)  
 FOR MORE UPDATES



# Terminates

(cont. from page 1)



Martinsville City Council received a plaque from Fayette Area Historical Initiative (FAHI) Executive Director Charisse Hairston acknowledging their sponsorship. From left, Mei, Lawson, Hairston, Jones, Gravely and Rawls are pictured.

move highlights the need for competent city officials.

“This person did not comply with the parameters she was given, and this person put the city at significant risk. We would have lost millions—let me say that again—millions of dollars to this person’s behavior who said to our own council and others that she would not relent, she would not follow the law, she would not respect the wishes of the body who governs her,” he said.

Noting that the city’s legal counsel gave sound advice, Rawls said no one wanted to rush the attorney or council to a decision.

“The lady acted, and we responded in the best interest. I’m sorry there are people who are connected to her that just can’t let it go, but there’s four of us that served you that night, and I don’t know what to tell you about the other one,” he said.

On Tuesday, Jones said some council members were ready to terminate Ferrell-Benavides even before the information was fully reviewed.

“That tells you a lot about where we were at and where we ended up at,” he said.

Rawls added that those who weren’t ready to act sooner should be ashamed.

Council Member Rayshaun Gravely said he would vote against the motion, despite previously voting to terminate Ferrell-Benavides’ contract.

“This (information) should have been presented when we made that decision last week,” he said.

Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson defended following the charter process, adding the motion was to right a wrong.

“According to the charter this is the process that should be followed, and if that’s what our charter says, then that’s what we should do,” she said.

Council Member Julina Mei said he wants discussions to move on to other subjects.

“I want to talk about roads, taxes, and getting our lives back on track here,” he said.

Ferrell-Benavides’ contract termination initially occurred on Thursday, August 7, in a 4-1 vote. Her employment was ended immediately and for cause, citing acts involving malfeasance and dishonesty, violations of city charter, city code, and city policy, unsatisfactory performance, and other behavior deemed by council to adversely affect public confidence or city integrity. Jones cast the dissenting vote.

The council also authorized its attorney, Sans Anderson, to provide pertinent facts of the investigation to the city’s Commonwealth’s Attorney in a 5-0 vote.

Following the termination, Jones said the council had been briefed on an ongoing investigation during a closed session.

“Based on that it was council’s determination to terminate her employment with the city. It was a 4-1 vote; I chose to object at this particular time because the investigation is still ongoing and we’re waiting for an audit to come back. As I spoke with council members, I reserve my opinion on it” until we receive the audit. “If it does provide credible information that laws or even policies were violated, then I would be in favor of going along with what council has decided,” he said.

Jones expected the council to make the decision it did.

“It was the understanding coming to the floor,” he said.

Jones said Ferrell-Benavides’ job search in Texas during the investigation is understandable.

“There’s a lot even with just this situation and a lot of other situations are going on, so I think she would probably be feeling that her employment was unpredictable either way it goes, and she would already be looking. To me that’s to be expected, and we haven’t been able to communicate with her for

about three weeks now, so that’s pretty much to be expected,” he said.

Jones added he believes the last time anyone had any contact with Ferrell-Benavides was when she was put on administrative leave at the July 22 meeting.

Lawson said the decision to terminate Ferrell-Benavides’ contract was extremely difficult.

“This is difficult. I think this is probably one of the most difficult decisions I’ve had to make,” she said.

Gravely said he based his vote on the information presented at the August 7 meeting.

“So far, I have not seen financial issues that’s been broke. But I will say that for some leadership, some leadership things, I had some questions,” he said.

Rawls said the termination is the culmination of 14 months of challenges.

“It’s been a long fight. It went from being a very lonely battle with essentially just me and some bad council members and some not good members of government. Seeing it through to this point and being able to get a majority vote, even if I know some of those votes weren’t for what’s good of the community but for their own political butt-saving, it’s a step in the right direction,” he said.

However, Rawls said the process has been taxing for the city.

“Unfortunately this is not the end; it is the beginning. There will be another effort to put someone who’s going to be malleable, who doesn’t mind doing favors—quid pro quo—so now I got to fight to prevent that person from getting into the city manager’s office,” he said.

Mei said residents witnessed most of the council acting in the community’s best interest.

“I want us to use this as an example to demonstrate to the city that we put them and the city staff paramount above anything else. I want that to be an example to other people looking from outside and from within,” he said.

Mei noted that the phrasing “multiple incidences relating to cause” in the termination motion means Ferrell-Benavides could be fired without severance.

“As far as I’m concerned ... any of those items would have been a reason, and actually there are other items” that could have been listed, he said.

Mei said he last saw Ferrell-Benavides about a month before her termination.

In other matters, the council:

- \*Heard from Ural Harris regarding the city attorney position, which is advertised on the city’s website.

- \*Received a plaque from Fayette Area Historical Initiative (FAHI) Executive Director Charisse Hairston acknowledging council sponsorship.

- \*Approved July 7, July 22, and July 23 meeting minutes.

- \*Approved on first reading budget appropriations for debt service, school capital projects, and street funds.

- \*Rescheduled the Sept. 9 council meeting to Tuesday, Sept. 16.

- \*Approved rezoning ordinance request on second reading for First Presbyterian Church.

- \*Approved on second reading a request to abandon the right-of-way at 1009 E. Church Street.

- \*Approved Arts and Cultural Committee request to apply for Harvest PUP Grant.

- \*Approved sunseting the Emergency Housing and Community Support Commission.

- \*Approved five-percent matching fund commitment for Hazard Mitigation Grant application for West Piedmont Planning District Commission Regional Generator Project.

- \*Approved Piedmont Community Services’ request to purchase 605 Fourth Street.



Melissa Chapman will serve as the Blue Ridge Regional Library system’s interim director.

## Blue Ridge Regional Library taps Chapman for interim post

By Taylor Boyd

Melissa Chapman became interim director of the Blue Ridge Regional Library system following the retirement of director Rick Ward in July. Chapman said she is unsure how long she will serve in the role. The system’s board will advertise, interview, and hire a new permanent director.

“I just think of myself as a placeholder for whoever comes after, and making sure that the ship stays straight and upright,” she said.

Despite the temporary nature of her appointment, Chapman has goals she hopes to accomplish, including tightening collection development policies.

“I’d like to see if I could start working on letting people know everything that we have and advocating” for the libraries “because I think many people don’t know what kind of resources we have. We have databases that could help students with their homework, and we have all of these programs that people can take advantage of — and most of them are free of charge,” she said.

Chapman holds a master’s degree in library science from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she worked in the special collections department as a student. After graduating, she worked at Matthews Public Library as its adult services librarian.

## Fincher

(cont. from page 1)

needs to be restored with the community. I can tell you that there are no better people to do that than the employees of the city of Martinsville,” he said.

Fincher said employees have often expressed their desire to serve the city professionally and reestablish trust with residents.

“So we’re going to be implementing some methods to rebuild some of that trust. It’s really a matter of transparency — allowing the public to see exactly what we do — because we’ve got some outstanding city workers here I’m proud to work beside,” he said.

Fincher has been serving as acting city manager since the council placed former City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides on administrative leave on July 22. The council has since voted to terminate Ferrell-Benavides’ employment, citing cause.

When he was named acting city manager, Fincher said the role felt overwhelming. Now, he said, he feels steadier.

“The department heads up here are phenomenal and they’re really helping me out. I feel good for the community that we’re going to be able to do some good work while they’re in the process of trying to find a permanent city manager,” he said.

Fincher said he is uncertain how long he will serve in the interim role.

“I’m available to serve this community for however long they want me to,” he said.

For the community to succeed, Fincher said, residents need to be able to trust their government — and vice versa. To achieve that, the city will examine its policies, practices and ways to report its activities to residents.

“Oftentimes when people don’t know what’s going on, they automatically assume it’s something bad. I’ve always felt that the more light we shine on things, the more people understand, and the less mistrust there is,” he said.

Fincher said some policies have already been updated, including those for travel and purchase cards.

“We’re going to be going through all the policies. We’ve got some great folks that are really interested in helping out with this,” he said.

While Fincher serves as interim city manager, Deputy Chief Maj. Chad Rhoads will serve as acting police chief.

come best friends—it’s like getting that “Goonies” or “Sandlot” vibe,” Sinnott said.

The pair plan to send the film to festivals and hope for a local premiere. For now, they are focusing on wrapping production and moving into post-production.

“It’s a miracle to get any film made,” Sinnott said. “Even telling friends that I’m making it—they’re all like, oh, I would like to get coffee with you and see how you pulled that off.”

## Indie

(cont. from page 1)

“Moonrise Kingdom,” the story aims to show the value of family despite opposing viewpoints.

“In fact, what we’re trying to do is show that we’re stronger together,” said Sinnott, who plays one of the sisters alongside Graboski. Sinnott previously directed “Unpacking,” which won multiple awards.

“This is my second time making an indie film. I shot my first film in Bali, in Indonesia, and it’s called “Unpacking,” and you can see it on Amazon,” she said. “That was a much smaller production, but the end result was really great. We were in 25 festivals and won 17 awards. We screened at the Richmond International Film Festival.”

“While “YOYOS” is a fictional story, it is inspired by my own relationship with my parents,” Graboski said. “I love my parents deeply, and we have luckily managed to remain close despite some ugly arguments. I still believe that we share a lot of the same values: family, kindness, love, community, and service. So how could our thoughts on how to protect those things differ so

much?”

The decision to film in Henry County came after Sinnott moved to the area in 2023. “We moved here and we made Martinsville/Henry County our home. And we’ll continue to make films. It’s exciting to be opening this up to the community and also see the community response,” Sinnott said, promising more movies in the future.

The film also boasts an impressive director. “After interviewing 11 great candidates, we chose Lynda J. Reiss, who we knew we were destined to work with. Lynda has worked in the industry for over 30 years as a property master and art director on projects including “Stranger Things,” “True Detective,” and “American Beauty,”” Graboski wrote on the crowdfunding page Seed&Spark.

Many cast members are Virginia locals. “We kind of actually do a worldwide search, but we have a number of actors from Virginia,” Graboski said. Several hail from the Richmond area. “Four of the seven kids are Virginians... they’ve all be-

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## Meetings

### Monday, August 18

PSA Regular Meeting, 6 p.m., 4th floor Conference Room, Henry County Administration Building, 3300 King's Mountain Road, Martinsville.

### Tuesday, August 26

Henry County Board of Supervisors meeting, 3 p.m., Summerlin Room, Henry County Administration Building, 3300 King's Mountain Road, Martinsville.

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

## Events

### Friday, August 15

TGIF Concert, sponsored by Rotary Club of Martinsville & Henry County. Band: Miss Mandy and the Somethings. Opens at 6 p.m., music begins at 7. Bridge St. parking lot, Uptown Martinsville. Food by Hugo's; beverages by Lawrence Distributing. Free event.

Needle Felting: Embellished Scarf, Shirt or Tote Bag, 2:30-4:30 p.m., Piedmont Arts. More information is available at [PiedmontArts.org](http://PiedmontArts.org). Advance registration required.

### Saturday, August 16

Hamburger Supper, \$10 at the Rangeley Ruritan Club, 5-7 p.m. Meal includes burger, potato sale, baked beans, dessert and drink. Extra burgers are \$3. Alpha Gal friendly options (turkey burger) available. Eat in or take out. Proceeds go towards community projects, with a portion of proceeds to go to FC Middle FFA.

9th annual Bike Ride, Car Show/Cruise In & Fish Fry at Mt. Nebo Holiness Church, 30598 JEB Stuart Hwy, Spencer. Sign in begins at 9 a.m.; ride at 10 a.m. No fee to ride. Fish fry starts at 8 a.m.; car show starts at 9 a.m. No fee to enter. For more information, call Angie Penn (276) 732-6014. For ride information, call David Hylton (276) 692-5878.

Fundraiser to benefit Henry County Food Pantry, 12-6 p.m., hosted by Ray Reynolds for Blackberry Supervisor and Fairystone Grill (former Red Barn), 8798 Fairystone Park Highway, Bassett. Chicken and BBQ available; hot dogs served to youngsters. Donations of water, nonperishable food items and canned foods are appreciated. Special thanks to Bassett Funeral Service.

### Sunday, August 17

Open Bluegrass/Country Jam Session, 1:30 - 4 p.m., Bassett Ruritan Club, 277 Philpott Dam Road, Bassett. Free admission. For information,

call Randy, 276 629-8296.

Library Board Meeting, noon, Patrick Branch Library, 116 W Blue Ridge St., Stuart.

### Saturday, August 23

14th annual Bikers for Babies, MHC, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Broad St. Parking Lot, Broad & Church streets, Uptown Martinsville.

Smith River Fest, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monogram Smith River Sports Complex, 1000 Irisburg Road, Axton.

Fish Fry hosted by the American Legion Homer Dillard Post # 78, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., 139 Creekside Dr., Martinsville. Drive-thru event with limited dining-in. Fish Sandwiches, \$9; homemade desserts, \$3; water & soft drinks, \$1. For pick-up orders, call (276) 673-7663 OR (276) 340-5169.

### Sunday, August 24

14th annual Bikers for Babies, MHC, 10 a.m.-noon, "Big Chair Parking Lot," Broad & Church streets, Uptown, Martinsville.

### Friday, August 29

Haircuts by Clark's Cuts, professional, licensed beautician, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., upstairs at the Bassett Ruritan Club, 277 Philpott Dam Road, Bassett. Suggested donation is \$15. All proceeds benefit the Bassett Ruritan Club. Walk-ins welcome.

## 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, 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 chil-

dren 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.

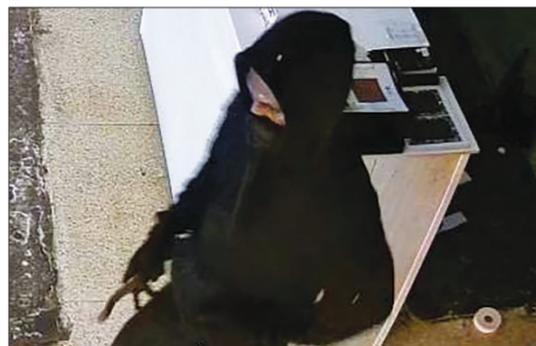
The Henry County Adult Learning Center offers free in-house and online classes to help prepare for college, career, or earn your high school equivalency or GED. Call (276) 647-9585.

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 [mhd-cva.org/meeting-rsvp](http://mhd-cva.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.

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.



## City restaurant break-ins remain under investigation

By Taylor Boyd

An investigation is still ongoing into the robberies of two Martinsville restaurants that occurred early in the morning on Friday, August 8.

The first robbery occurred at El Palmar Restaurant Mexican Grill on Bridge Street at 4:50 a.m.

Video from the restaurant showed that around 4:50 a.m. a male suspect wearing a mask, gloves, and dark clothing broke in and took money from two cash registers.

At approximately 6:47 a.m. the second occurred at Tequila's Sports Bar and Grill on Spruce Street.

"What appears to be the same suspect from the El Palmar break-in, broke into the restaurant and took cash from at least two cash registers," a Martinsville Police Department release stated.

Martinsville Acting Police Chief Maj. Chad Rhoads said the two robberies are related.

"It was the same person in both of the surveillance videos from the stores. They were within 90 minutes or two hours of one another," he said.

As of August 12, no suspect had been arrested in relation to the robberies.

"We're following up some leads, we're actually working with another jurisdiction now who has had similar" break-ins. "It's another local jurisdiction who has had some restaurant break-ins, and it kind of looks like we're working with the same suspect," Rhoads said.

Rhoads said he doesn't anticipate it will be too long before an arrest is made in connection with the incidents.

He encouraged anyone with information to call the Martinsville Police Department at 276-638-8751 or Crime Stoppers, an anonymous tip line, at 276-632-7463. Crime Stoppers offers rewards of up to \$2,500 for information leading to an arrest and conviction in criminal cases.

## Bomb threat at animal shelter results in arrest

Henry County's Office Animal Services Shelter received a voicemail from a female caller threatening to "get a bomb and bomb anything involving police" on Wednesday, August 6, around 12:42 p.m., according to a release from Sheriff Wayne Davis.

Animal services deputies, along with the shelter manager, immediately assessed the facility and determined there had been no lapses in security, and that no animals, staff members, or citizens were in any danger.

During the investigation, the phone number from which the voicemail originated was iden-



Carrie Jean Harlow

tified as allegedly belonging to Carrie Jean Harlow, 67.

As a result, warrants were obtained for threat to bomb.

On Wednesday, August 6, Harlow was arrested without

incident at her home and transported to the Henry County Adult Detention Center, where she was released on a \$3,000 secured bond.

The Henry County Sheriff's Office takes all threats of this nature seriously and will continue to pursue charges against individuals who cause alarm and disrupt public safety. Anyone with information regarding this incident is encouraged to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at 276-638-8751 or Crime Stoppers at 276-632-7463 (63-CRIME). Information leading to an arrest and conviction may be eligible for a cash reward.

## Fatal shooting on Forest Street under investigation; authorities seek public's help

Martinsville Police officers responded to a large disturbance in the 500 block of Forest Street, at 9:50 p.m., August 12, according to a release from Acting Martinsville Police Chief Chad Rhoads.

Officers arriving at the scene found that one woman had been shot. That woman, Crystal Galloway Jordan, 39, of Martinsville, was transported to the Sovah-Martinsville Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries.

While investigating, a Danville man, 20, also arrived at the hospital with gunshot injuries. He remains in serious condition with injuries

that are also believed to be related to the incident, the release stated.

Members of the Henry County Sheriff's Office, the Virginia State Police and the Martinsville Sheriff's Office also responded to the scene and the hospital and assisted with the investigation.

Investigators are processing the scene and interviewing witnesses. If you have any information about this incident, please contact Lt. Richard Barrow at 276-403-5458 or Crime Stoppers at 276-63CRIME (276-632-7463) Crime Stoppers is an anonymous tip line and you could receive an award up to \$2,500.

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# OPINION

## Wins: Part 2

In a July newsletter, I discussed some wins in recent legislation.

Since that newsletter, I secured another legislative win which, if passed by the Senate, will help Fairlawn, Virginia.

Despite its location in Pulaski County, the community of Fairlawn shares the same ZIP Code, 24141, with the City of Radford.

As a result, confusion often arises.

Last autumn, this ZIP Code issue presented a significant challenge.

Following Hurricane Helene, several localities were designated eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance.

For several days, Pulaski County was designated eligible while Radford was not.

Since Fairlawn residents have an identical ZIP code to Radford, FEMA's online portal to request Individual Assistance (IA) blocked them!

My bill to remedy this situation and secure a unique ZIP code for Fairlawn was added to a larger bill that recently passed the House. Both Virginia senators have a companion bill.

Recent legislative progress also spells victory for Ninth District national security and defense programs.

The reconciliation bill invests funds in submarine technology and nuclear forces.

\$4.6 billion will support the development of a second Virginia-class attack submarine, while \$2 billion will help accelerate development of nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles.

All of the U.S. Navy's submarines are now nuclear-powered and they account for roughly 50% of U.S. nuclear warheads, according to the Department of Defense.

Located just outside Virginia's Ninth District, BWXT Technologies in Lynchburg continues to develop nuclear technology to power our submarines.

Earlier this year,



**Morgan Griffith**

Representative

BWXT announced the opening of the BWXT Innovation Campus. This center will focus on nuclear technology advancements for land, sea and space.

As BWXT grows its operations, the reconciliation bill allows groups like BWXT to develop America's nuclear armed forces.

Additionally in the reconciliation bill, \$1.4 billion goes to expand the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) industrial base, \$120 million for the development, procurement and integration of long-endurance UAS for surveillance, and hundreds of millions of dollars related to UAS.

In the 21st century, warfare methods are shifting. UAS drones are used increasingly for military operations.

Just look at the Russia-Ukraine war.

This July, it is estimated that Russia launched more than 6,400 drones and missiles into Ukraine while Ukraine launched more than 3,000.

ABC News reports that July set new records for the intensity of cross-border attacks.

The Russia-Ukraine war is a sign of things to come, and that is partly why we boost military spending in unmanned aerial systems.

Virginia's Ninth District is no stranger to drones: in 2015, the first Federal Aviation Administration-approved drone delivery mission in U.S. history took place in Wise County.

One of the groups involved in this mission, the Health Wagon, helped plan the drone mission to deliver medical supplies to the Remote Area Medical clinic.

Now, the Ninth could be a key leader in the

research of drones for defense purposes.

For years, Virginia Tech has been a leader in drone use for multiple purposes. Virginia Tech helped open a UAS testing center in 2013 and later a drone park facility in 2018.

Just this May, Virginia Tech announced the launch of a new research center dedicated to drone research for defense.

Virginia Tech's Counter UAS Research and Testing Center will help the Department of Defense and law enforcement mitigate threats posed by drones.

UAS are just one piece of the puzzle in our renewed military investments.

Another key enhancement in the reconciliation bill includes strengthening our defense supply chain and building our munitions stockpile.

Many have voiced their concerns about American munition production falling behind.

In a recent hearing, Democratic Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee Adam Smith highlighted the need to build capacity for critical munitions.

Through hundreds of millions of dollars, the reconciliation bill enhances the development and procurement of a wide range of weapons.

\$100 million is also dedicated to the production of small and medium ammunition. While it remains to be seen which ammunition factories aid in this effort, I will continue supporting Radford Army Ammunition Plant and its role in helping America meet its defense ammunition demands.

By equipping our soldiers with traditional ammunition and modern advanced weaponry, American armed forces will be best positioned to win or deter a potential conflict.

I am confident that these continued developments of our armed forces and enhancements of our ammunition stockpiles will go a long way in projecting American strength to the world.

Through American strength, we can achieve peace.

From ZIP Code improvement to military readiness, Congress is delivering wins.

# Our community is its people, and we've lost some special ones

If you barely exist – work, then grocery shop at a major chain store, then camp out on the couch to watch Netflix or network TV – your view and definition of your community probably consists of the roads, the traffic, the large chain stores, your kid's sports schedule.

If you really live within your community – if you participate, if you interact – then your view and definition of the community is its people.

And for those of us who view community as its people, our community has definitely changed this week, and it will no longer be the same. We lost Kenny Smith, and the next day, Johnny Robertson. Those voids come just a few months on the heels of having lost entertainer Elisabeth Minter and friend-to-all Patrick Wright and industrialist and philanthropist George W. Lester and businessman Fred Wooden and Christmas lights delighter Wes Tatum and Ridgeway advocate Ed Page and wood artist Terry Mitchell.

And the list goes on.

Our community is the five city council members, and the departing city manager, and the crazy shenanigans thereof.

Our community is Toolie (Leroy Hairston) and Mrs. (Ruby) Fontaine, who are vigilant observers at city council meetings. Toolie often takes the podium and is beloved for his lively commentary and suggestions. Our community is the late Alexis Lee, who until she passed away in 2020, was a model citizen attending government meetings and sharing her perspective, and Karen Supon Doyle, who is taking on that role of informed and informing citizen.

Our community is our fine entertainers, singers and actors – those in TheatreWorks Community Players and the Patriot Players and our churches. We have just lost Elisabeth Minter from among them. Then there are the independent entertainers, such as Natalie Hodge with Rudy's Girl Media.

Our community is the people we see walking the streets or around town on a regular basis. There's the tall man in the grey jacket who used to be around all the time, but I haven't seen in a couple of years, now that I think about it – have you? There's the short man in the grey jacket who will cuss you out in a heartbeat if he is anywhere within your range, so it's best to cross the street if you see him coming. There's a sturdy looking elderly lady named Mary, who is always wrapped up well in sweaters and stockings. She used to walk around with her best friend, another woman, but the other woman has not been with her in a couple of years. There's Michelle, a middle-aged lady who is really sweet, and who got married last year so now has someone to walk with her. There was that lady who walked around pulling a suitcase behind her.

Patrick Wright and Kenny Smith were regulars at the Martinsville Library. You'd see Kenny outside sometimes walking from here to there, but Patrick drove around in his small red pickup truck with stickers on the back.

Patrick would talk with you about Beard Man, a character he created and wrote about, and getting his GED. Kenny would talk to you about anything and everything of Martinsville's history, especially families and how they



**Holly Kozelsky**

were connected and the roles they played.

We lost Patrick in March. That kind, gentle soul was just 2 weeks shy of his 58th birthday. Kenny passed away on Aug. 4. He was 76.

The day after Kenny died, Johnny Robertson passed away. The bold and fearless preacher was 65.

He had a YouTube channel called "Johnny Robertson (What Does the Bible Say)" and video program, "What Does The Bible Say?" as well as a program on Star News. His channel has 6,600 subscribers, and some videos have loads of views such as "Gospel Preacher Johnny Robertson 27 YEARS OF TAKING UNFILTERED CALLS ON LIVE TV" with 43,000 views.

Johnny Robertson's two sons, Caleb and Micah, did it along with him. They were a commanding trio – movie-star good looks, immaculately dressed, and with talent for delivery.

Feelings about the Robertsons are mixed in this community because, as you know if you are even just barely aware of them, they took on other local churches, religious practices and pastors relentlessly.

Caleb took on me once, though very mildly and just in passing. He had a screenshot of one of my newspaper articles (I was once a reporter) and had circled the word "pussyfooting" and made a lot of complaints about that. (The word just means to act in a cautious or noncommittal way, or to move stealthily or warily, in the spirit of the way a cat moves.) I took a screenshot of that and have it among my mementos.

Around 2020 Micah broke free. He challenged his father in person and via social media posts. He has been living in Montana for the past few years, and the Robertson Community Challenge was down to just Caleb and Johnny Robertson.

Being short a man did not seem to cramp their style at all. The father-son duo tag-teamed it on showing up places ready to video and record and play back on their show full of commentary and complaint.

A heavy burden it is, when one is convinced his church and views are the only correct church and views in the entire world, and he must challenge and convert everyone else.

Suddenly Caleb is no longer around. He has moved out of state. For the past few weeks, it was down to just Johnny, and suddenly, not even Johnny anymore.

That's a big bit of drama, then, that suddenly is dropped from our community (for now? For good?).

The more things change, the more they stay the same, they say; and also, the only constant is change.

Nascent personalities are developing now. We may or may not realize who the next Johnny Robertson, and the next Kenny, are, but eventually, we will recognize them.

And they, like the Robertsons and Kenny, will be woven into the fabric of our community.

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**PUBLISHER**  
 Michael Showell

**EDITOR**  
 Debbie Hall - dhall@theenterprise.net  
 (276) 694-3101

**ADVERTISING MANAGER**  
 Wendi Craig - advertize@mainstreetnewspapers.com  
 (276) 340-2445

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

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# Sports Schedule

The following are the dates and times of local high school teams and their games for the week of August 18-23:

8/18	2pm	Golf	Bassett - match at Tuscarora C.C.
	2pm	Golf	Magna Vista -match at Tuscarora C.C.
8/22	7pm	Football	Carroll County at Bassett
	7pm	Football	Magna Vista at Dan River
	7pm	Football	Martinsville at Halifax County
8/23	10:30am	Volleyball	TBA at Bassett

Thank You for reading Henry County Enterprise

# OPINION

## Regarding martial law

Remember Jade Helm 15?

Ten years ago, Jade Helm 15 took place in several southwestern U.S. states. It was a joint military exercise involving 1,200 personnel, and it was intended to train soldiers in the skills they would need to fight abroad.

Jade Helm wasn't particularly unusual as far as military exercises go, but the scale of the operation was larger than most.

This led to some pretty wild conspiracy theories, mainly because the President at the time was, of course, Barack Obama.

Alex Jones amplified a lot of these conspiracy theories. There were theories that the military was going to take away everyone's guns and stockpile them in shuttered Wal-Marts to be distributed to invading ground troops from China, which is kind of like a Mad Lib of your worst uncle's inner monologue. There were also theories that the word "Helm" in Jade Helm was an acronym for "Homeland Eradication of Local Militants." There was even a theory that the last day of the exercises — September 15, 2015 — was going to coincide with an asteroid hitting the Earth.

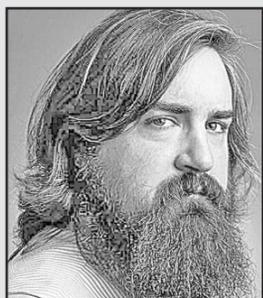
But the biggest and most mainstream conspiracy theory regarding Jade Helm — the one parroted by numerous voices on the right — was that it was the first step to Obama declaring martial law. And what could be a greater threat to our nation than the President replacing civilian government with military rule? Can you even imagine such a thing?

Ten years later, it's pretty easy to imagine such a thing, since President Donald Trump just did it.

On Monday — the day I'm writing this column — Trump announced that he was putting the Washington, D.C. police department under federal control and deploying the National Guard to the streets of the nation's capitol. He did this by declaring a "public safety emergency" and invoking section 740 of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, which allows the President to commandeer the D.C. police in "conditions of an emergency nature."

And what exactly is the emergency? I'll let the man himself answer.

"I'm announcing a historic action to rescue our nation's capitol from crime, bloodshed, bedlam and squalor and worse," Trump said to reporters at the press conference. "This is Liberation Day in D.C., and we're gonna take our capitol back.



By Ben R. Williams

We're taking it back. ... The murder rate in Washington today is higher than that of Bogota, Colombia, Mexico City, some of the places that you hear about as being the worst places on Earth."

First off, that's not true. In fact, violent crime has been declining in D.C. for the last two years. Secondly, we already had a Liberation Day. It was April 2, the day that Trump unveiled his tariffs designed to liberate Americans from whatever money was left in our wallets.

So how are we going to fight this fictitious surge in violent crime in D.C.?

"We have slums here," Trump said. "We're getting rid of them. I know it's not politically correct. You'll say, 'Oh, so terrible.' No, we get rid of the slums where they live. Caravans of mass youth rampage through city streets at all times of the day. They're on ATVs, motorbikes. They travel pretty well. They fight back, until you knock the hell out of them. Because it's the only language they understand."

It's been a few years since I've been to D.C., but I was unaware that it had become a lawless wasteland of violent ATV-mounted youth. Maybe instead of sending in the National Guard we should have Snake Plissken fly in on a glider.

For months now, there has been a sense that Trump has been itching to invoke martial law. But why now? This is the equivalent of Germany passing the Reichstag Fire Decree without first having a Reichstag fire.

It's too early to tell how this is all going to pan out or why Trump has decided now is the time to fortify Washington, D.C. If I were to speculate, I would imagine that maybe something is about to hit the news — something Trump has either done or is about to do — that would lead to such massive protests that he feels the need to circle the wagons and protect himself.

On an unrelated note, release the Epstein files.

Column Sponsored by: Dr. Mensink

## Hashmi

(cont. from page 1)



Melody Cartwright, who is opposing incumbent Del. Eric Phillips in November, introduced Hashmi.

of Delegates candidate Melody Cartwright, who introduced her. "Senator Hashmi wrote the bills to protect abortion rights and Medicaid in Virginia. She's standing up to Trump and his attacks against both of those and so many more."

Hashmi spoke about her multicultural background, recalling her 2019 campaign slogan: "Ghazala Hashmi is an American name."

"I asked our voters that question — do you recognize me as a fellow American? Do you recognize me as a fellow Virginian? And when we flipped that red seat in Richmond in 2019 for the Virginia Senate, my voters in the Richmond area overwhelmingly proved that Ghazala Hashmi is an American name," she said.

She criticized political division, particularly from former President Donald Trump, and pledged to defend abortion rights, same-sex marriage, and education.

"We are fighting for justice for every person that lives in our Commonwealth, and especially for those who have been historically marginalized," she said.

Hashmi also highlighted her work on rural issues. When she first joined the Senate, she requested to serve on the Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee.

"I work very closely with so many of our farming communities, making sure that we're providing resources and services," she said.

On rural healthcare, Hashmi



Bellevue, former home of Kennon C. Whittle, circa 1996 (Photo credit: Virginia Department of Historic Resources)

## Community Chronicles

By Jarred Marlowe

Few Virginia families can boast the legal legacy of Stafford Gorman Whittle and his son, Kennon C. Whittle — a father-son duo who each rose from small-town law practice to serve on the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia.

Stafford Gorman Whittle was born December 5, 1849, at Woodstock, the family home in Mecklenburg County. His education was shaped by the turbulence of the Civil War, beginning in Norfolk and later continuing under private tutelage in Botetourt County. After attending school in Pittsylvania County, Whittle entered Washington College (now Washington & Lee University) at age 18 and went on to study law at the University of Virginia in 1868.

Admitted to the bar in 1871, Whittle began practicing in Martinsville. In 1881, he was appointed judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit, though he lost the seat the following year to the Readjuster Party. He returned to the bench in 1885, serving until 1901, when he was elected to the Supreme Court of Appeals. Elevated to court president in 1917, he served in that role until his resignation in 1919.

Returning to Martinsville, Whittle remained active in Christ Episcopal Church and enjoyed his remaining years with family until his death in 1931. His long judicial career was marked by steady leadership and a deep respect for the law.

Following in his father's footsteps, Kennon C. Whittle was born in Martinsville and educated locally before earning his law degree from Washington & Lee University in 1914. Admitted to the bar that same year, he began practicing in Martinsville and

rose quickly in legal circles, serving as president of the Virginia Bar Association in 1940–41.

Appointed judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit in 1944, Whittle was elected to the Supreme Court of Appeals in 1951, where he served until retiring in 1965. He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by Washington and Lee in 1950 and was active in the Phi Delta Phi legal fraternity.

Justice Kennon Whittle's tenure on the high court included one of the most controversial legal episodes in Virginia history — the case of the "Martinsville Seven." In 1949, seven Black men were convicted of raping a white woman, Ruby Floyd. All seven were eventually sentenced to death, a penalty rarely imposed on white defendants for similar crimes at the time.

The NAACP appealed the sentences, citing constitutional violations, but Judge Whittle upheld the verdicts, citing the brutality of the attack. The men were executed in 1951, and the case remains a subject of legal and civil rights debate decades later.

Beyond the courtroom, Kennon Whittle was married to Mary Holt Spencer, connecting him to notable Southern families. The couple lived at Bellevue, a historic Martinsville home built by Revolutionary War veteran Major John Redd. Both Stafford and Kennon Whittle are buried in Martinsville's Oakwood Cemetery.

Jarred Marlowe is a local resident and historian. He is a member of the Col. George Waller Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Blue & Gray Education Society, and the committee chair for the Martinsville-Henry County 250 Committee. He may be reached at marloweja15@gmail.com.

## City, county will receive VCA funds to boost creative economy

The Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) announced more than \$5.5 million in grant funding for fiscal year 2026 to support artists, arts organizations, programs, and creative initiatives across the state.

Henry County and the City of Martinsville each received a Creative Communities Partnership Grant for Piedmont Arts Association in Martinsville. Piedmont Arts Association also was awarded General Operating Support for Medium and Large Organizations.

Patrick County received a Creative Communities Partnership Grant for The Reynolds Homestead.

The FY26 grant allocations include:

- \*160 General Operating Support for Medium and Large Organizations (GOS) grants, helping arts groups continue and expand arts experiences across Virginia.
- \*63 Operating Support Small (OSS) grants for small and emerging arts organizations central to commu-

nity vibrancy.

\*100 Creative Communities Partnership Grants (CCPG), encouraging local and tribal governments to support the arts through matching funds.

\*36 Community Impact Grants to fund new and innovative art-based projects reaching local communities.

Funded by the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), these investments aim to strengthen Virginia's diverse arts sector and expand access to the arts statewide.

In addition to these grants, VCA awards more than 250 grants annually through its Virginia Touring and Arts in Practice programs. These programs provide state-supported arts opportunities throughout the Commonwealth. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

More information on deadlines, eligibility, and the VCA Artist Rosters is available at [www.arts.virginia.gov](http://www.arts.virginia.gov).

called the situation "of grave concern," noting efforts to support community health workers, expand licensing opportunities for doulas, and bolster public health departments.

"We're on the brink of significant changes," she said, warning that federal cutbacks to Medicaid could create a "real crisis" for rural hospitals.

Hashmi also emphasized job creation, particularly through education and industry partnerships.

"Our community college or other institutions of higher education,

target areas of curricular programs, degree programs that will lead to jobs [and] attract new companies to come to this area," she said. "I see a lot of promise around our green industries."

She called bringing green industries to Martinsville "a recipe for real growth" and urged voters to send a message in November.

"We're gonna go forward this November, send a loud message to Washington, send a loud message to MAGA extremists that we are standing up for the values that Virginians truly care about."

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## Families urged to pack back-to-school lunches safely

Back-to-school shopping usually means backpacks, notebooks and lunchboxes. But don't forget to add food safety to the list.

Young children, especially those under age five, are more likely to get seriously sick from foodborne illness. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is reminding parents, caregivers, and anyone packing school lunches to follow a few simple food safety steps.

"As the school year begins, we want families to keep food safety top of mind," said USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Administrator Dr. Justin Ransom. "Young children are more vulnerable to foodborne illness, and we want to make sure they stay healthy and ready to

learn."

Here are USDA's top food safety tips for the school year.

**Keep cold foods cold**

Use at least two cold sources, such as gel packs, frozen water bottles, or frozen juice boxes. Place them on top and bottom of perishable items like meat, poultry, and eggs. This helps keep food out of the Danger Zone, which is between 40 and 140 degrees F. In this range, bacteria can grow quickly and cause illness.

**Choose the right lunchbox**

Use an insulated lunchbox. Paper bags are not a safe choice because they tear and leak as cold items thaw, which allows cold air to escape.

**Keep hot foods hot**

For hot foods like soup or chili, use an insulated container. Fill it with boiling water and let it sit for a few minutes before adding food. Dump out the water, add the hot food, and keep the lid closed until lunchtime. Hot foods should stay at 140 degrees F or higher.

**Follow the four steps to food safety**

\*Clean: Wash hands with soapy water for at least 20 seconds before, during, and after handling food. \*Clean and sanitize lunchboxes regularly.

\*Separate: Keep raw meat and poultry separate from fruits, vegetables, and other ready-to-eat foods. \*Discard any containers or bags that held raw items.

\*Cook: Use a food thermometer

to make sure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature.

**\*Chill:** Use two cold sources to keep perishable foods below 40 degrees F. Discard leftovers if they enter the Danger Zone (between 40 and 140 degrees F) for more than two hours.

For more information about food safety, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) or email [MPHotline@usda.gov](mailto:MPHotline@usda.gov).

Access news releases and other information at USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS) website at [www.fsis.usda.gov/newsroom](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/newsroom). Follow FSIS on X at @usdafoodssafety and USDA on Instagram at @usdagov and Facebook at @usda.

## Plan for Virginia to complete broadband access unveiled

Virginia has published a proposal to complete the Commonwealth's goal of providing high-speed internet connection to all homes, businesses, and community centers, Gov. Glenn Youngkin said last week.

Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) published the Commonwealth's Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Final Proposal

which, once approved, will award \$613 million in federal funding to connect the last 133,500 Virginia locations not yet covered by high-speed internet services.

When Youngkin took office in 2022, there were 435,924 customers left unserved in Virginia. With a combination of federal and state resources, the Commonwealth has funded connections to all customers statewide except 133,500 re-

maining customers. The plan published for public comment today will bring that number to zero.

"Day one, we made a promise to connect all Virginia homes and businesses to reliable, high-speed internet, and these grants, once approved, will fund the last step to keeping that promise," said Youngkin. "All Virginians should be proud that we are the nation's leader in broadband connections, having built 3.5 times more connections in the past four years than any other state. And with the new rules approved by Secretary Lutnick that cut red tape, we are able to do it while saving \$200

million taxpayer dollars, a 25 percent savings."

The grants for broadband installation, administered by DHCD, will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA) for final approval. The funding will connect 133,500 customers to reliable, high-speed internet and leverage \$434 million in private investment from internet providers.

Under the new "Benefit of the Bargain" grant application process at the U.S. Department of Commerce, Virginia received double the applications, showing robust interest in the program's streamlined requirements established by the Trump Administration. Through the partnership, Virginia will connect all unserved homes and businesses while also controlling costs.

Virginia's Final Proposal is now open for public comment for a 7-day window before it is submitted to the NTIA for final approval.

More information on Virginia's Final Proposal can be found at [dhcd.virginia.gov/bead](http://dhcd.virginia.gov/bead).

## Puzzle Answers!

**SNOWFLAKES**  
solution

**U.S. NATIONAL PARKS**

**SCRAMBLERS**  
solution  
1. Grovel 2. Chute; 3. Linear; 4. Porous  
Today's Word  
**ATROCIOUS**

**FEAR & A KNIGHT**  
answer

FLAMBE ALDAVIS SPEAKS  
LILIES BARLINE WENTAT  
OPERATION OFFLINE ENCASE  
ESS PANICS PUMPCACHE  
BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN  
SPILLER YAS POMP  
TATA ORE REISSUE IND  
RISKASSESSMENT TREMOR  
ENMESH BET SEC YAPPY  
PSY TREE AUSTERE TRES  
TROUBLE IN PARADISE  
CURE BAY AREA IMUS SET  
ATEAM NED GIN CUBANO  
ENAMOR LIFE OF THE PARTY  
NET NUCLEAR SOI SIRE  
PESO VILASSOED  
SORRY TO BE AN UNUSANCE  
PLEASE BLOC SCARER ARS  
ADMIRE MONOPOLY MARKET  
TEASEL ELITIST IMFINE  
ERNEST RENT DAY ASKNOT

**Weekly SUDOKU**  
Answer

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

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# Crossing the Lines

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

### Workforce training surges as P&HCC grows for third straight year

As it gears up for the 2025-26 academic year, Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) is poised for a third consecutive year of enrollment growth.

“We have, for the last three years, grown each year, and in fact, this is the first time in two decades that the college has experienced overall enrollment growth,” P&HCC President Dr. Greg Hodges said.

Between its three sites, Hodges said about 3,000 students will attend, pursuing either an academic or workforce track.

Still, while proud of the recent growth streak, Hodges remains cautious. “We know the reality of the region regarding its population and recognize what’s been called in higher education the enrollment cliff, or demographic cliff, where there’s simply fewer people in a given area. We know that that’s likely going to hit. We kept saying in the middle part of this decade, so we’ll see,” he said.

“We have about 2,000 on the academic side. Those are the Pell-eligible programs—transfer programs, and career

and technical education (CTE) programs like welding and mechatronics—things students can use Pell dollars to fund,” he said.

Hodges estimates about 1,000 students are enrolled in workforce or FastForward programs.

“Those are the short-term credentials like phlebotomy, powerline, CDL—where students spend a few weeks in class, then take the certification exam and go straight into employment,” he said.

Hodges estimates P&HCC will offer hundreds of classes across its academic divisions.

The largest area of enrollment growth has been in short-term workforce certification programs.

“We were 23 to 24 percent up from last year, which mirrored what we were up the two years prior,” he said.

Of the students in Pell-eligible programs, about half intend to transfer to a four-year college, and the other half are pursuing CTE degrees.



Patrick & Henry Community College President Dr. Greg Hodges said the college is seeing growth in enrollment and workforce certifications.

### Disaster Relief Food Ministry ends Stuart site, continues Bassett operations

Disaster Relief Food Ministry has closed its Patrick County distribution site at Rotary Field in Stuart and ended its senior food box program, but the organization continues working to address the community’s food insecurity needs.

The nonprofit implemented the changes in June.

Carol Willard, who started the group with her husband, Jimmy Willard, said he has been experiencing heart issues since February.

“He’s got like five blockages in his heart, and he was having these spells of when he would



Volunteers pack food boxes in an assembly line at Disaster Relief Food Ministry in Bassett.

even bend over or start to do something he would almost pass out. It went out for a little bit there, and we actually had to reel him back in,” she said, noting her husband has stepped back from day-to-day responsibilities.

As a result, Willard said other volunteers stepped up to fulfill the six

food box distributions the ministry had been doing monthly.

“The thing of it is though, a lot of people think it’s just coming and throwing food in a box and trucking it up the road, but it’s not. I mean it takes a lot, unless you’re here doing it you really don’t understand what it takes. It just got

to where everybody was tired,” she said.

Last month, when volunteers were packing the food boxes, Willard said she asked them for suggestions on how to proceed.

“This wasn’t a decision that me and Jimmy made because this isn’t just our ministry, mine and his, this is all of ours ministry.

Everybody talked and they come to the conclusion that if we gave up the senior program and then close the site at Patrick County that would help alleviate some of the load,” she said.

The ministry’s board of directors approved the plan.

In a public announcement letter, the group said its volunteers have

served tirelessly and their well-being is vital to continuing its mission.

“Reducing the load now allows them the necessary rest and renewed strength for the days ahead, while maintaining their compassionate connection with those we serve. Please know that this decision was made with much prayer and unity. We remain hopeful for future opportunities to grow and expand,” the letter stated.

About 600 boxes were distributed monthly through the senior program between Patrick and Henry counties.

### PCHS grad explores fleeting moments in Roanoke art exhibit

Paul Vivier, a 1988 Patrick County High School graduate, is showcasing a collection of paintings and sketches this August at Roanoke’s Left of Center Art Space. His work captures moments of transition — the temporary and the changing — inspired by his surroundings and recent move to Roanoke.

Vivier is the son of Hilda Stanley and Charles Vivier of Meadows of Dan. He lives in Roanoke with his wife, Lindsey.

The exhibit features around a dozen paintings and another dozen sketches.

Vivier estimates he has been painting on and off for about 30 years. While he attended Virginia Commonwealth University for art, he graduated with a degree that would help him



Paul Vivier’s work will be displayed at the Left of Center Art Space throughout August.

do digital work such as web design.

“I was in my 30s, and I started getting frustrated by everything that was digital not being permanent. Everything that I was doing was just getting overwritten in new versions, so I wanted something that if I was going to spend time on it would kind of stick around for a little while,” he said. “I’ve been drawing and sketching for most

of my life, but I took up oil painting as the result of trying to do something more permanent.”

Vivier said he sees two primary themes in his work. One focuses on the general discovery of his surroundings.

“Sometimes that’s traveling, it’s whatever’s in front of it. I moved to Roanoke last year, and so just moving to a new area and going to new places,” he said.

### Patrick County Ozone Allstars make history with third-place finish at DYB World Series



Front row (left to right): Easton Conner, Colston Collins, Jensen Harbour, Easton Taylor, Robbi Campbell. Middle row: Lucas Hall, Tobin Simmons, Caylin Edmonds, Ian Martinez-Tejeda, Hunter Thomas, Lane Cameron. Back row: Coaches Corey Edmonds, Brandon Simmons, Michael Hall, Bentley Stanley.

The Patrick County Ozone Allstars not only captured the Virginia state championship — they also made history by finishing third in the Dixie

Youth Baseball (DYB) World Series.

This marks the first time a Patrick County team has reached that level of success.

# THANK YOU FOR READING

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

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1-3-5-7-9 1-3-5-7-9 1-4-7-9 1-4-7-9:15 1-3-5-7-9



# PUZZLE TIME



## FEAR & KNOT

By: rj Johnson

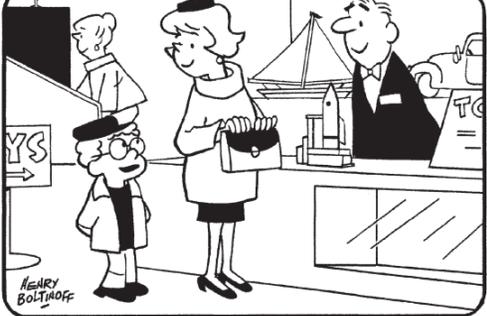
DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

PGY  
SLINYO  
ORCAP  
♥EIAD  
MOYPEN  
RYA  
EANO  
MIGNA  
♥EAP  
♥SUDCER  
IGPNI  
♥YPER

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

## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Leg is moved. 2. Sign is longer. 3. Pocket is added. 4. Boy is smaller. 5. Skirt is moved. 6. Boy is moved.

## MAGIC MAZE ● U.S. NATIONAL PARKS

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

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

- Acadia
- Arches
- Badlands
- Biscayne
- Crater Lake
- Denali
- Glacier
- Grand Canyon
- Katmai
- Olympic
- Redwood
- Rocky Mountain
- Saguaro
- Yosemite
- Zion

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## Super Crossword

## GAMEPLAY

**ACROSS**

- Served in blazing liquor
- Longtime executive of the Oakland Raiders
- Utters words
- Tulip relatives
- Divider of musical measures
- Began vigorously
- Classic board game played by judges between trials?
- Put in a box
- Ending for priest
- Gets frantic with fear
- Oil rig part
- Feel sore
- Russian war vessel on which a classic board game is played?
- Person knocking over a drink, e.g.
- "queen!" ("You go!")
- Grandiosity
- "Toodle-oo!"
- Bauxite, e.g.
- Publish anew
- Neighbor of Mich. and Ill.

**DOWN**

- Review of a classic board game?
- Quiver
- Tangle up
- Trifecta, e.g.
- 1/60 min.
- Like some noisy little dogs
- OPs (CIA tactics)
- Maple or oak
- Morally rigid
- 60% of cinco
- Classic board game that's popular with inhabitants of heaven?
- Make whole again
- San Francisco's region
- Don of radio
- Tennis match unit
- First-string players
- Springfield's
- Singapore sling liquor
- Havana resident, to Havanans
- Infatuate
- Classic board game played at a shindig?
- Tennis court divider

**ACROSS**

- Nail file stuff
- Throat bug
- Analgic targets
- "I'll pay for this one"
- Exuberant
- "I'll pay for this one"
- Endearing for Siam
- Commercial lead-in to -gram or -matic
- Turn the car toward
- Ballet promoter, e.g.
- "Huh-uh!"
- Teetotalers
- About
- Landscaping plant
- Step
- Has food
- Pack tightly
- "My People" writer Abba
- A, in French
- Wolfgang Puck's restaurant
- Bring forth
- Make juice of
- Ethel
- Merman's "— Was a Lady"
- "The jig —"
- Normandy city
- Reader (eclectic quarterly)

**DOWN**

- Big ice sheet
- They may be chapped
- Toby brews
- Space station until 2001
- "C'mon, help me out here"
- Will subject
- Bubbling over
- Knight's weapon
- Containing smelting waste
- TV title ET
- Cruella De — ("101 Dalmatians" meanie)
- Like purchases gotten via the program
- Close using stitches
- Cleaned with a broom
- Ballpoint, e.g.
- Put up tents
- Sharp as —
- Maker of GLEAN cereals
- Dutch genre painter Jan
- Preludes
- Janitors' tools
- Actress
- Lively
- Injure
- "Got it now"

## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- Beef and liver paste, squeezed from a tube, was the first meal eaten in space, consumed by Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin, who chose it because it was space-friendly.
- Cigarettes were once advertised as a source of relief for asthma and hay fever.
- September is the only month to have the same number of letters in its name as its number in the calendar year.
- A full head of hair can support the weight of two elephants.
- The original recipe for Oreos, which were originally called Oreo Biscuits (though it's not clear where "Oreo" came from), included pork fat for the cookie's creamy center.
- Ninety-five percent of books that are submitted to traditional publishers are rejected.
- Senet, or senet net hab ("game of passing through"), the oldest known board game, dates back more than 5,000 years and has been found in the tombs of Egyptian royalty, including King Tut.
- Canada's Parliament once argued about the appropriateness of using the word "fart" on the chamber floor.
- In medieval Europe, animals, especially pigs, were put on trial for crimes, with prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges.
- Oct. 31, 2000, was the last day all humans were together on Earth. Since that time, there has always been at least one person in space.
- In early 2019, an 18-karat gold toilet named "America," made by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan and valued at \$6 million, was stolen from Blenheim Palace in England. The four thieves responsible were captured, but the toilet's ultimate fate remains a mystery, though authorities suspected it may have been melted down.
- The bite of a mountain gorilla is twice as strong as a lion's.

## Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦♦**

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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## SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦**

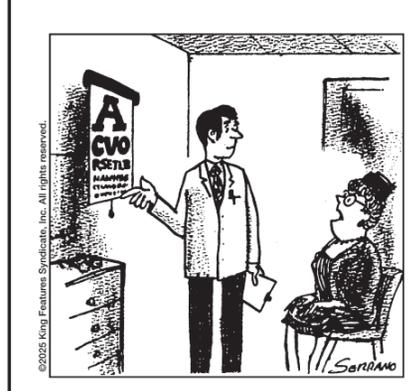
♦ Easy ♦♦ Medium ♦♦♦ Difficult

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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

**A**LWAYS TRY TO HIT INTO THE WIND RATHER THAN WITH IT, IN YOUR PRACTICE SESSIONS. THAT WAY YOU'LL LEARN MUCH MORE ABOUT HOW YOU'RE SWINGING.

**THE REASON IS THAT STRONG FOLLOWING WINDS "KNOCK DOWN" SHOTS FASTER THAN NORMAL, SO YOU DON'T GET A TRUE PERSPECTIVE FROM THEIR FLIGHT PATTERN. ALSO, TAIL WINDS REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF SIDESPIN, MAKING IT HARD TO TELL HOW MUCH YOU ARE REALLY CURVING THE BALL.**



## 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!

Implore  
**VLOGER**

Slide  
**UTECH**

Direct  
**NAILER**

Spongy  
**SOORUP**

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The Henry County School Board prepared to welcome students to the Aug. 12 start of the 2025-26 school year.

## County school board reports progress on facilities, bus upgrades

By Jessica Dillon

The Henry County School Board met Aug. 7 to discuss the new school year and provide brief updates on school facilities.

Though the meeting was short, it offered insight into the progress of planned updates.

Revised policies were reviewed and verified.

Regarding facilities, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has completed the turn lane at Magna Vista High School, with crews ensuring pavement markings are in place before school starts Tuesday. Drainage work is finished at both high school football fields.

Backup cameras and air conditioning units for special education buses are in progress, as are generator installations. The Laurel Park roof project is “progressing well,” board mem-

bers said.

Bus drivers practiced their routes twice to minimize transportation issues on the first day, which was Tuesday, Aug. 12.

The kitchen floor at Sanville Elementary School required replacement and work is ongoing. The nutrition department has plans to prepare meals elsewhere if the floor isn’t finished before school opens.

Dr. Joshua Bocock is the new principal at Magna Vista High School. “I really believe that gentleman would take Magna Vista and move it on up very high in our school and in our school system,” said board member Champ Hardie, of the Ridgeway District. “Dr. Bocock is determined to guide Magna Vista High School to be a high-quality school in all areas. I truly believe that he will.”

Schools Superintendent Dr. Amy Blake

Lewis distributed magazines and urged board members to share them with the community.

“It’s just a very exciting thing to be able to put that magazine in someone’s hand and say, ‘Hey, your children are about to start school. Are you Henry County? That’s where they need to be.’ Or, ‘I know you’ve been homeschooling your students, but would you like to see all the good things happening in Henry County?’ Or, ‘I know you opted out for a religious exemption, but if you’re ready to come back to public school, look at all the great things we’re doing,’” she said.

Blake-Lewis also noted that all ninth-grade students will meet with counselors to ensure they are on track to graduate.

The community is invited to a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Bassett High School Fieldhouse on Aug. 22 at 8 p.m.

## LEGAL



### Route 57 (Chatham Road) Henry County

Willingness to Hold Public Hearing  
Notice of Intent to Abandon Previously  
Discontinued Primary Highway

Pursuant to §33.2-902 Code of Virginia, the Henry County Board of Supervisors will consider abandonment of a discontinued section of Route 57 (Chatham Road) from 0.037 mile west of Route 925 (Stockton Road) to 0.12 mile west of Route 925, a distance of 0.08 mile. This section of road was discontinued on June 16, 1983.

This matter is being considered by the Board of Supervisors at the request of VDOT as a prerequisite to the conveyance of surplus right of way. To ask questions or request additional materials related to the proposed abandonment, contact Lisa Hughes at 276-629-2582, 1-800-367-7623 or TTY/TDD 711.

If your concerns cannot be satisfied VDOT is willing to hold a public hearing. You may request that a public hearing be held by sending a written request to Lisa Hughes, Virginia Department of Transportation, 309 Weeping Willow Lane Bassett, VA 24055 on or prior to **September 1, 2025**. If a request for a public hearing is received, notice of date, time, and place of the hearing will be posted.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Salem District Civil Rights at 540-387-5552, 1-800-367-7623 or TTY/TDD 711.

## LEGAL

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the City Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia, will hold a Public Hearing on August 26, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., or soon thereafter, in the City Council Chambers, Second Floor, City of Martinsville Municipal Building, 55 West Church Street, Martinsville, Virginia, on an intended amendment by the City Council to the City's fiscal year 2025-2026 budget. Interested persons may appear at the time and place above stated and may present their views at the public hearing. A copy of the full text of the proposed amendment is on file in the office of the Martinsville City Manager, 55 West Church Street, Martinsville, Virginia 24112 and is available for inspection during normal business hours. A brief synopsis of the proposed amendment is as follows: Streets revenue increase of \$323,175.14, Streets expenditure increase of \$323,175.14, General Fund Capital Projects revenue increase of \$422,411.95, General Fund Capital Projects expenditure increase of \$422,411.95, Water and Sewer Capital Project revenue increase of \$1,074,126, Water and Sewer Capital Project expenditure increase of \$1,074,126, School Capital Improvement revenue increase of \$1,197,145, and School Capital Improvement expenditure increase of \$1,197,145.

Notice Submitted By:  
Peyton J. Nibblett  
Deputy City Clerk

## LEGAL

### COUNTY OF HENRY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings has been scheduled for **August 27, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. The purpose of these public hearings is to receive citizen input into the possible issuance of a Variance and a Special Use Permit for the following cases.

#### Case S-25-12 Danny Gardner

A request for a Special Use Permit was received under Section 21-302 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the establishment of a campground facility to accommodate up to 23 sites. The property is approximately 24-acres, located on the north east side of River Rd and approximately 0.6-mile south of Field Ave. The property is in the Horsepasture District, is zoned Agricultural District A-1, as shown on Tax Map 40.2/113A.

#### Case S-25-13 Roger and Deborah Wheatley

A request for a Special Use Permit was received under Section 21-302 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the establishment of a campground facility to accommodate up to 20 sites. The property is in the south east corner of the intersection of Riverside Dr and Governor Stanley Hwy, in the Blackberry District. The parcel is scheduled to be considered for rezoning to Agricultural District A-1, by the Henry County Board of Supervisors on August 26, 2025. The Tax Map number is 15.8/163A.

#### Case S-25-14 Miller Brothers Racing, LLC

A request for a Special Use Permit was received under Section 21-302 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to allow for the re-opening of the former Oak Level Raceway to host motorsports events and other types of entertainment. The property is located at the end of Raceway Dr, in the Reed Creek District. The property is zoned as Agricultural District A-1, as shown on Tax Map 6.4/11G, 6.7/11K & 6.4(3)/3.

#### Case S-25-15 Whitney Sligh

A request for a Special Use Permit was received under Section 21-702 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to offer a transitional living opportunity for young adults aging out of the foster system. The property is located at 1850 Daniels Creek Rd, is proposed to be rezoned to Office and Professional district B-3, as shown on Tax Map 29.7/(60)/6.

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

## Use caution around buses and crosswalks as classes resume

With more than one million Virginia students heading back to school this month, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is reminding motorists to stay alert in school zones and around school buses to help keep students safe and avoid costly tickets.

Students will commute on foot, by bicycle, school bus, or in private vehicles, making it critical for all drivers to use caution.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, school buses are the safest way for students to get to and from school. However, students are most vulnerable when walking to and from the bus and during loading and unloading.

VDOT urges drivers to be patient and attentive in school zones and near buses. Children are small and can be hard to see.

In Virginia, it is illegal to pass a stopped school bus with flashing red lights and an

extended stop sign. This applies to motorists approaching from the front or overtaking the bus from behind. Drivers do not need to stop if the bus is on the opposite side of a median or barrier, but they should remain alert for students crossing the road.

Some local governments have also installed speed enforcement cameras in school zones. These cameras, which are not operated by VDOT, monitor driver speeds during designated hours. Violators can be fined.

### Tips for Drivers:

- Be patient. Buses make frequent stops.
- Yellow lights mean the bus is preparing to stop. Slow down.
- Stop when red lights are flashing and the stop sign is extended.
- Watch for children at bus stops or crossing the street.
- Stay alert near schools, especially during pickup and drop-off times.
- Don't drive distracted. Put electronic devices away and focus on the road.

### Tips for Parents and Guardians to Share With Students:

- Arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes early.
- Stand back from the street — at least five big steps from the curb.
- Use sidewalks when available. If not, walk facing traffic.
- Cross streets only at marked crosswalks or intersections.
- Follow crossing guard instructions and pedestrian signals.
- Look for traffic before stepping off a bus.
- Limit use of electronic devices while walking.

For more safety information, visit [www.virginiadot.org](http://www.virginiadot.org).

## LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE - CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATE CHANGE FROM SEPTEMBER 9TH - TO SEPTEMBER 16TH  
The Martinsville City Council has changed its September meeting schedule. The regular meeting originally planned for Tuesday, September 9, 2025 has been cancelled. Council will instead meet on Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, unless otherwise announced.

Agenda items from the canceled meeting will be moved to the September 16 agenda unless reassigned or postponed by Council.

This notice is provided in accordance with § 2.2-3707(C) of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Submitted by  
Peyton Nibblett, Deputy Clerk of Council

## LEGAL

### PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

COUNTY OF HENRY, VA  
SOLAR FACILITY SITING AGREEMENT

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2316.8 of the Code of Virginia, the Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard, in the Summerlin Meeting Room on the first floor of the Henry County Administration Building at 3300 Kings Mountain Road in Martinsville, Virginia.

The purpose of the public hearing is to receive citizen input on a proposed Solar Facility Siting Agreement between Henry County and Firebird Solar, LLC a Virginia Limited Liability Company.

A copy of the full text of the proposed Solar Facility Siting Agreement may be viewed in the Office of the County Administrator in the County Administration Building on Kings Mountain Road, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

## LEGAL

### COUNTY OF HENRY REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, the Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct public hearings on the following applications on **August 26, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia.

The purpose of these public hearing is to receive input into the possible rezoning of property. Following are the specifics of the public hearings.

#### Case R-25-11 John D. Horsley and Claudia G. English

The property is located at 1317 The Great Rd, in the Blackberry District. The property is shown on Tax Map 39.3(18)/4,5 and a portion of 39.3/353. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 7-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to market the property for the potential to keep agricultural animals.

#### Case R-25-12 Roger and Deborah Wheatley

The property is located in the north east corner of the intersection of Riverside Dr and Governor Stanley Hwy, in the Blackberry District. The property is shown on Tax Map 15.8/163A. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 3.725-acres from Commercial District B-1 to Agricultural District A-1. The applicant wishes to rezone the property, and apply for the required Special Use Permit, to allow for the development of a RV park.

#### Case R-25-13 Whitney Sligh

The property is located at 1850 Daniels Creek Rd, in the Collinsville District. The property is shown on Tax Map 29.7/(60)/6. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of of this lot, containing a residence, from Suburban Residential District S-R to Office and Professional District B-3. The applicant wishes to rezone the property, and apply for the required Special Use Permit, to offer a transitional living opportunity for young adults aging out of the foster system.

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

## LEGAL

### PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE COUNTY OF HENRY, VA

SOLAR FACILITY SITING AGREEMENT

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2316.8 of the Code of Virginia, the Henry County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as can be heard, in the Summerlin Meeting Room on the first floor of the Henry County Administration Building at 3300 Kings Mountain Road in Martinsville, Virginia.

The purpose of the public hearing is to receive citizen input on a proposed Solar Facility Siting Agreement between Henry County and Thunderbird Solar, LLC a Virginia Limited Liability Company.

A copy of the full text of the proposed Solar Facility Siting Agreement may be viewed in the Office of the County Administrator in the County Administration Building on Kings Mountain Road, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

## LEGAL

### Notice of Public Hearing

Martinsville City Council will hold public hearings on August 26, 2025, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of the City of Martinsville Municipal Building located at 55 W. Church Street, Martinsville, VA 24112, for those parties in interest to the following request(s).

- 1) **REQUEST for REZONE** - Application of The City of Martinsville requesting to rezone several properties located along Commonwealth Blvd. from ED-G, Economic Development-General, to C-C, Commercial Corridor to correct existing non-conforming uses. The rezoning of property is a request that requires review by the Martinsville Planning Commission and review and approval of Martinsville City Council.
- 2) **REQUEST for REZONE** - Application of City of Martinsville requesting to rezone property located at 100 S. Jackson Street from C-C, Commercial Corridor, to R-T, Residential Transitional to allow for residential and commercial uses. The rezoning of property is a request that requires review by the Martinsville Planning Commission and review and approval of Martinsville City Council.
- 3) **REQUEST for REZONE** - Application of the City of Martinsville requesting to rezone properties located in the Five Points Neighborhood on W. Church Street and Emanuel Street from C-C, Commercial Corridor, to R-T, Residential Transitional to correct an existing non-conforming use. The rezoning of property is a request that requires review by the Martinsville Planning Commission and review and approval of Martinsville City Council.

Questions or comments regarding this matter can be directed to Hannah Powell at [hpowell@martinsvilleva.gov](mailto:hpowell@martinsvilleva.gov) or (276) 403-5156.

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

# Businesses unite to fund environmental projects across Dan River Basin

Eco Ambassador Council backs five efforts to improve access, safety, and habitat in local communities



Volunteers will clean up and revitalize Fred Clifton Park in Patrick County, adding new park accessories and interpretive signage. (Photos courtesy of DRBA)

The Eco Ambassador Council (EAC), a coalition catalyzed by Carter Bank and composed of local businesses—including Blair Construction, Clark Gas & Oil, Frith Construction, Hooker Furnishings, Intertape, Jones & DeShon Orthodontics, and Pickle & Ash—has announced funding for five transformative environmental projects across Southern Virginia and the Dan River Basin.

These businesses work together with their charitable investments to drive regional change by supporting initiatives that build community resilience, expand access to nature, protect ecological health, and promote economic growth.

Each initiative represents a shared commitment to sustainability, safety, equity, and the restoration of natural spaces—directly benefiting local communities while protecting the region’s unique ecosystems.

“These projects demonstrate the power of local action,” said Tyler Carter, EAC member and community reinvestment administrator for Carter Bank. “Each one addresses a different facet of environmental health such as making nature more accessible, restoring ecosystems, or simply keeping people safe on the river. They’re proof that with the right support, small communities can lead big change.”

## Teaching Water Safety

One initiative, Water Safety Education for All, is led by the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA). It brings free, beginner-friendly kayak safety classes to underserved communities in Henry County, Martinsville, Patrick County, and Danville. Participants, many of whom have never had access to formal instruction, will learn core river skills such as trip planning, boat fitting, paddle techniques, and Leave No Trace ethics.

Each participant will also receive personal safety gear, including river maps, dry shirts, waterproof flashlights, whistles, and multi-tools. The program is designed to promote safe recreation, outdoor equity, and stewardship of regional waterways.

## Clearer River Signage

Also led by DRBA, the Play It Safe River Access Safety Signage Initiative will install more than 50 permanent, bilingual signs at public river access points in Virginia and North Carolina. The signs will feature paddling tips, emergency contacts, river condition guidelines, and environmental ethics.

Featuring universal icons and English/Spanish messaging, the signs are designed to improve safety for all users—including those with limited literacy—and enhance emergency response capabilities.

“With the support of the EAC, we’re breaking down barriers—whether physical, economic, or

cultural—to create welcoming spaces where everyone can safely and meaningfully connect with the outdoors,” said Anna Wheeler, DRBA’s recreation and stewardship manager. “The EAC is an incredible network of business leaders who truly understand the environmental needs and challenges facing our region and are committed to combining their resources to make the greatest possible impact.”

## Fred Clifton Park Revitalization

In Patrick County, EAC funding will support the Fred Clifton Park Renovation project to breathe new life into a scenic community asset known for its breathtaking overlook and peaceful setting. Volunteers will repaint worn structures, clean up the grounds, and install interpretive signs to highlight the park’s geological, ecological, and cultural significance.

Located near the popular Lovers Leap scenic stop along the Blue Ridge Parkway, the enhanced park will better serve both residents and travelers, encouraging longer visits, greater engagement with nature, and a deeper appreciation of the region’s natural heritage.

“We are excited to receive the grant,” said James Houchins, Patrick County’s director of economic development and tourism. “The Eco Ambassador Council’s dedication to enhancing green spaces is a great service to local communities. I have often said that Patrick County has many hidden gems, and Fred Clifton Park is one! This grant will help keep the park fresh and inviting.”

## Woodland Trail Bridge Rebuild

In Spencer, the Woodland Trail Bridge Rebuild will restore a vital trail connector at the Spencer-Penn Centre. The deteriorated bridge currently limits access to a looped trail used by seniors, families, and individuals with disabilities for exercise, wellness, and education.

Led by local volunteers, the rebuilt bridge will ensure continued access to the only outdoor trail in Spencer that is fully accessible to those with mobility needs.

“After some major storms wiped out the bridge on the Woodland Trail, we are so excited to know that thanks to the Eco Ambassador Council, the bridge will be rebuilt and the full trail will again be accessible to our community,” said Susan King Sabin, executive director of the Spencer-Penn Centre. “These partnerships are critical to providing the best resources and opportunities to our neighbors and visitors. Having beautiful assets only matters if they are accessible to everyone.”

## River Restoration in Stuart

The South Mayo River Structures Removal Project, led by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR), will elimi-



The Woodland Trail bridge at Spencer-Penn Centre is set to be rebuilt, restoring safe, full access to the trail loop.

nate two low-head dams and two sets of concrete bridge piers in Stuart. The outdated structures block fish migration, collect debris, endanger paddlers, and degrade habitat.

Removing them will improve safety and open nearly 10 miles of the South Mayo River to aquatic species, including the state-threatened Orangefin Madtom and lay the groundwork for potential reintroduction of extirpated mussel species. In addition to ecological gains, this three-week project will significantly improve safety and river access in Stuart—supporting eco-tourism, recreation, and a community-wide connection to the health of the river.

“The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources is incredibly excited to have been awarded grant funds from the EAC to support the removal of defunct structures in the South Mayo River,” said Louise Finger, stream restoration biologist with VDWR. “These funds, in combination with support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Virginia Tech, and other partners, will improve aquatic habitat, fish passage, and safe, recreational use of

the river.”

## Beyond the Checkbook

EAC support includes more than financial backing. Members will also be hands-on and engage their workforce to volunteer for some of the projects. As these five projects move forward in the coming months, they will collectively promote safety, education, environmental equity, and a deeper sense of connection to the natural resources that belong to the Dan River Basin.

“These projects show what’s possible when local businesses step beyond the day-to-day grind and come together to invest in the shared future of our communities and environment,” said Anna Lester, vice president of Clark Gas & Oil and partner at Pickle & Ash. “The EAC is more than just funding—it’s about building a culture of stewardship, connection, and collective responsibility.”

As these five projects unfold in the months ahead, their collective impact will ripple through the region—strengthening environmental equity, improving safety, and deepening the community’s connection to the Dan River Basin.

## City schools explore AI tools, PBIS training



Martinsville Schools Superintendent Dr. Zebedee Talley, Jr. (third from left), and city school board members prepared for students to return to class.

## By Jessica Dillon

The Martinsville City School Board met Aug. 12 to discuss Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) training, use of artificial intelligence tools in classrooms, and several policy updates.

Tammy Vaughan, director of academic support, spoke about PBIS training and a program that provides students with social-emotional assessments three times per school year. The program is divided into three tiers to better track student needs and allow staff to focus on those requiring additional support.

“They work with creating behavior expectations and framework and the school works in areas such as discipline and chronic absences,” Vaughan said.

Martinsville has applied for grants to help fund the program and received \$30,000 to support team leaders. The team tracks school absence data, and chronic absenteeism has decreased as a result.

Tyler Hunt, coordinator of industrial technology and head of the district’s AI team, is evaluating Magic School AI, an AI-powered platform built by educators for educators.

“Magic School AI has over 80 AI tools for teachers, especially in lesson planning and alignment of the standards,” Hunt said.

Hunt believes supportive AI tools can help address the teacher shortage. “This is one way we can improve that and improve retention because we can take the time that is required for teachers to lesson plan, analyze things, create assessments, differentiation—all of these things can be cut in half with these tools,” he said. “Educators and district admins can monitor every single piece of information that students are putting into their AI tools.”

The goal is for at least 50% of teachers to use at least one Magic School AI tool on a consistent basis. The platform also offers personalized learning, adapting to student needs, Hunt added.

The student handbook was updated with new policies for Advanced or Accelerated Mathematics, Purchasing Procedures, Student Conduct, and Requests for Public Records.

The board also recognized Rick-yah Mitchell-Hairston, VHSL state champion in the girls 100-meter dash.

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

# Miles 4 Vets continues under Henry County Senior Services

Henry County Senior Services is now operating the Miles 4 Vets program, a free transportation service that provides rides to medical appointments for veterans across Southside Virginia.

The change ensures uninterrupted access to care for those who served, with the same trusted driver remaining behind the wheel.

Originally operated by the Southern Area Agency on Aging (SAAA), Miles 4 Vets offers weekly transportation to VA medical centers and other healthcare facilities in Danville and Salem (Roanoke). When SAAA's third-party transportation contractor unexpectedly closed in June 2025, Henry County Senior Services stepped in to prevent a lapse in service.

"Since we already had an existing transportation contract with SAAA, this was a natural fit," said Ashley Mundy, director of Senior Services. "We knew how important this program was to our local veterans, and we wanted to make sure it continued without missing a beat."

The program runs every Monday to Danville



and every Wednesday to Salem, transporting veterans to appointments scheduled between 8 and 11 a.m. While the service focuses on VA medical centers, other medical facilities can also be accommodated. The Miles 4 Vets bus is fully handicapped-accessible and seats up to 14 passengers.

Henry County also retained longtime driver

Sam Robinson, who has worked with the program for years and is widely known and appreciated by riders.

"Sam is a familiar and friendly face for our veterans. We're fortunate to have him continue in this role," Mundy said.

Veterans in Henry, Pittsylvania and Franklin counties, as well as the cities of Martinsville and Danville, are eligible for the free service.

Appointments can be scheduled by calling the SAAA Mobility Management Team at 276-632-6442. SAAA works closely with Veterans Service Organizations and case managers to ensure eligible veterans are aware of the program and can access it.

Mundy said she hopes to expand the service.

"We would love to see more veterans use this service and, with additional funding, increase the number of trips per week," she said. "It's a small way to show our appreciation for the sacrifices they've made."

For more information, contact Henry County Senior Services or the Southern Area Agency on Aging at 276-632-6442.



Imam Zaghad, Rev. Ryan Ware and Martha Woody discuss neo-nationalism and religious unity during an event in Collinsville.

## Religious leaders debate neo-nationalism, stress unity across faiths

By Jessica Dillon

A discussion about neo-nationalism was held in Collinsville at Smith Memorial Methodist Church, featuring representatives from Islam, Christianity and Judaism. The panel discussed whether their religion should guide national values and how their faiths view the existence of people of different beliefs.

Rev. Ryan Ware represented Christianity. He cited 1 Peter 2:11: "Dear friends, since you are immigrants and strangers in the world, I urge that you avoid worldly desires that wage war against your lives, live honorably among the unbelievers."

"We run with this idea that you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood," Ware said. "God has established this, and then we ignore that you're immigrants in the world. You're not supposed to be one race, one people. This is a reminder that ensues."

Ware said God's promises to Israel remain, but Christians are called to love their neighbors, regardless of ethnicity. "Paul writes that there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus," he said. "The labels of the world are not the labels God uses."

"The idea is that we cannot condone ethno-nationalism," Ware added. "We cannot uphold that one group is better than another. If we are in Jesus Christ, we are one—brothers and sisters, all one. No other labels matter."

Imam Zaghad, representing Islam, noted many verses in the Quran begin with "O mankind," addressing all humans, not just

Muslims.

"The best in the eyes of God are the most pious, regardless of being Christian, Jew, Muslim, or otherwise," he said. "We are all created from one—Adam."

He said pride in family, community or country is natural, but feeling superior to others is wrong. "That's where we get off the right path."

Martha Woody represented Judaism. "In Genesis, it says every individual is created in the image of God," she said, "reinforcing that we are all brothers and sisters."

Woody acknowledged she was "a little scattered" after a late trip, but stressed unity. "There is no 'we and they.' There is just us. The sooner we figure that out, the better things will be for everybody."

She addressed the "treacherous" situation in Israel, reading from the Israeli Declaration of Independence: "The state of Israel will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants... It will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race or sex."

"But I don't think that is true right now," Woody said. She criticized the phrase "from the river to the sea" as a call for Israel's annihilation, calling it "a call to vengeance, not justice."

She said peace has been elusive, noting that two Israeli leaders who made progress were assassinated by their own people. "If ethno-nationalism is bad for Jews as a minority, then it is equally problematic when Jews are the majority holding state power."

## Bikers

(cont. from page 1)

**THE 14TH ANNUAL BIKERS FOR BABIES, MHC**

A BENEFIT FOR:  
**THE PREGNANCY CARE CENTER OF MHC**

**23RD AUGUST 2025**

PROTECTING LIFE, SUPPORTING WOMEN

All Vehicles are welcomed      lunch provided, Door Prizes Auction items

10am Registration, 12 noon start  
Broad Street Parking Lot  
Martinsville VA 24112

PAGTRICK RUSMISEL@276-734-9585      JAY SANTOEMMA @ 276-734-4100

ROUTE Martinsville to Sontag to Ridgeway, 55 mile route

[www.MHCBIKERFORBABIES.com](http://www.MHCBIKERFORBABIES.com) [WWW.PREGCC.COM](http://WWW.PREGCC.COM)

The Pregnancy Care Center, now under director Paula Wood, also received a brand-new sonogram machine this year. "It's one of those newer ones, not sure if it's 4D or what, but it's state of the art," Rusmisl said. "Still free for the young ladies who come in."

One young woman recently came in abortion-minded with twins, but after seeing them on the screen, she changed her mind and chose to keep them. "That one alone makes the whole thing worth it," he said.

"So far this year, we have performed 74 ultrasounds and 67 pregnancy tests. We have more than 70 clients who have taken our Earn While You Learn courses online to earn points to spend in our boutique. Enrollment in that program has increased by 54 percent from last year at this time," Wood said.

This will be the event's final

year at the parking lot in Martinsville. "We're moving out of the city next year," Rusmisl said. "They decided to start charging us for a parking lot we've used for free for years. First, we had to pay to apply. Then we had to pay again just to use it."

"They told us people rent picnic shelters for birthday parties, so they figured they'd start charging for the lot, too," he said. "Charities included."

For those participating in the event this year, there will still be door prizes, a barbecue lunch, and a full day of programming. The event's sponsor page is available at [www.mhcbikersforbabies.com](http://www.mhcbikersforbabies.com), and the team is hopeful more supporters will show up this year.

"We've gotten good response," Rusmisl said. "But you don't know anything until people start showing up."

Email [submissions@theenterprise.net](mailto:submissions@theenterprise.net)

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JOHNSON

MARTIN L. FEB. 13, 1927 JAN. 4, 2006

RUTH D. APR. 14, 1949 JAN. 8, 1929 AUG. 22, 2010

TOGETHER FOREVER

Thank you for reading Henry County Enterprise

# 'Lucy's Lemonade' stand raises \$5,523 for SPCA



State Sen. Bill Stanley shops at "Lucy's Lemonade for the SPCA." (Contributed photos)



Lucy Rothrock, 6, and her friends Liza Harris, 9, and Sally Vaughn, 12.

"Lucy's Lemonade for the SPCA," raised \$5,523 at a lemonade stand — perhaps the most ever earned at a lemonade stand in three hours.



Lucy Rothrock and her friends Liza Harris and Sally Vaughn are dedicated to helping animals, and hold events to support the SPCA.

"Lucy's Lemonade for the SPCA," organized by 6-year-old animal lover Lucy Rothrock, raised \$5,523 at a lemonade stand staffed by Lucy and her friends Liza Harris, 9, and Sally Vaughn, 12. The total may be the most ever earned at a lemonade stand in three hours.

Thanks to a post on Star News, state Sen. Bill Stanley — nicknamed "Senator Beagle" on the Senate floor for his role in closing Envigo, an inhumane beagle breeding facil-

ity that sold animals to laboratories for drug experiments — attended as a generous customer and SPCA supporter.

The girls hosted the fundraiser Aug. 11 at 1203 Sam Lions Trail. SPCA staff attended with adoptable pets, shared information about the Louise R. Lester Spay & Neuter Clinic, offered free animal-themed coloring books, and sold lemon pecan sandies.

This was the second "Lucy's Lemonade for the SPCA." At last year's event, Lucy, then

5, along with Harris and Vaughn, earned \$582.50 for the organization and set a goal this year to raise \$1,000 and help get a homeless animal adopted.

The girls were scheduled to present the proceeds Tuesday, Aug. 12, to Dr. Jennifer Kotouch, SPCA veterinarian; Catherine Gup-ton, chief operations officer; and Caroline Cicilese, director of development and communication, at the SPCA, 132 Joseph Martin Highway, Martinsville.

# Ferrum College welcomes largest incoming class since 2018



The Ferrum College Class of 2029 posed for their inaugural class photo on the steps of Schoolfield Hall.

Ferrum College is celebrating a historic milestone as it welcomes its largest incoming class since 2018, coinciding with the college's highly anticipated transition to NCAA Division II athletics. This year marks a defining moment in Ferrum Rising—a renewed era of academic, athletic, and community excellence.

Students from across Virginia, the nation, and around the world arrived on campus last

week to start class today, ready to join generations of Ferrum Panthers who dared to say "yes" to their future. This vibrant and diverse group embodies the College's mission to prepare servant leaders for lives of purpose and impact.

In a message to the Class of 2029 during the traditional honor pledge and pledge to graduate ceremony on Friday, Ferrum College President Mirta M. Martin said, "This is not just

another first day—this is a historic beginning. You have dared to say 'yes' to your future. You belong here. You were chosen not just because of what you've done, but because of who you will become. You are now part of the history of Ferrum College, and we are honored to be part of yours. Welcome to commitment. Welcome to honor. Welcome to Ferrum Rising. Welcome home."