

HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

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Support for NCI, P&HCC proposal sparks questions from board, partners

By Taylor Boyd

Some officials, partners, and business residents of New College Institute (NCI) said they were unaware of a resolution asking the Henry County Board of Supervisors to support Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) overseeing NCI's operations.

At its Sept. 23 meeting, the board unanimously approved a resolution endorsing P&HCC to convert NCI into the Patrick & Henry Workforce Economic Development

Building. County Administrator Dale Wagoner said the request came from NCI Board of Directors member Dr. Mark Crabtree and was supported by two other board members.

The decision has raised questions among NCI officials, board members, and partners who say the proposal bypassed the usual processes and left some stakeholders uncertain about the future of programs and partnerships housed at the institute.

Henry County School Board Chairman Teddy Martin II,

said Longwood University, which offers a teaching program at NCI, is a significant partner for the school division.

"Quite a few of our administrators have gone through programs at NCI, whether that be through Longwood, JMU (James Madison University), or others that have partnerships there. That Longwood program has graduated quite a few of our teachers," he said.

He said future teachers take in-person classes through Longwood at NCI, and es- (See Support p. 5)



Phase 4 of Fieldale Service Line Project to begin Oct. 20

The Henry County Public Service Authority (PSA) has issued the Notice to Proceed for Phase 4 of the Fieldale Service Line Project.

Construction is scheduled to begin on October 20, with final completion estimated around September 16, 2026.

This phase will impact approximately 150 customers as outdated water lines and service (See Phase p. 2)

Grace Network opens Pumpkin Patch, dedicates pavilion to beloved volunteer



Volunteers and community members attended a ribbon-cutting for a new pavilion built in honor of longtime volunteer Kenny Smith, known as "The Keeper of the Pumpkin Patch." (Courtesy rbs news now)

By Jessica Dillon The Grace Network Pumpkin Patch has reopened for the season, once again offering a field full of bright pumpkins for families to enjoy. Volunteers unloaded

the pumpkins on Sept. 25, and a ribbon cutting was held Sept. 30 to dedicate a new pavilion that will provide shelter for those working the patch.

The new structure honors longtime volunteer Kenny Smith and features a plaque reading "The Keeper of the Pumpkin Patch." Smith was well-known for his tireless help with the patch and around First Baptist Church, where the event is held.

"We certainly will miss our Kenny," said Executive Director Tracy Hinchcliff. "Kenny Smith was always just a wonderful soul that stayed in our community and helped out here all the time. He helped rotate the pumpkins so they wouldn't rot, picked (See Grace p. 2)

Ferrell-Benavides notifies city of possible lawsuit over termination

By Debbie Hall

Former Martinsville City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides, through her attorneys, has notified city officials of a potential lawsuit against the city.

Letters dated Oct. 2 were sent to Interim City Manager Rob Fincher, Martinsville Mayor LC Jones, and Daniel M. Siegel, Group Leader of the Government Practice at Sands Anderson, the city's legal firm. The correspondence came from attorney Verbena M. Askew of the Verbena Askew Law Firm, P.C., in Newport News, and attorney Paul Goldman.

The letters mark the latest development in the ongoing controversy surrounding Ferrell-Benavides' August termination. The Martinsville City Council voted 3-2 to end her contract "for cause" following a closed-session discussion. (See Ferrell p. 10)



From left: Ridgeway Volunteer Fire Department Treasurer John Adams, Fire Department President Tim Decker, Ridgeway Town Council member Maeve McCulloch, and Mayor Craig O'Der.

Ridgeway Volunteer Fire Department receives \$15,000 grant

By Taylor Boyd

The Town of Ridgeway presented a \$15,000 check to the Ridgeway Volunteer Fire Department on Wednesday, Oct. 1. The funding comes through the Virginia Fire Programs Fund, for which the town applied earlier this year.

"We're glad to support them in any way," Mayor Craig O'Der said.

The department has not yet decided how to spend the grant. Treasurer John Adams said officers will determine the most pressing needs, which could include turnout gear,

hoses, or other equipment.

President Tim Decker said the department is considering replacing aging extrication equipment, which are tools used to rescue entrapped people from vehicles. "Some of that stuff is getting so old it's getting more and more maintenance, it's getting hard to use. It just needs to be updated," he said.

Decker noted the rising cost of equipment. A new Airpack costs about \$10,000, and a hydraulic rescue tool, commonly called the (See Ridgeway p. 10)

Former Martinsville restaurateur names city officials in lawsuit

By Debbie Hall

Rico Johnson, who operated the former Kornna Kitchen restaurant in Martinsville, has filed a civil lawsuit naming Interim City Manager Rob Fincher in his capacity as police chief, and former Vice Mayor Aaron Rawls as defendants.

The two-count complaint, filed Oct. 6, alleges that Fincher defamed Johnson and the restaurant, and that Rawls slandered Johnson personally. The filing claims the defendants' "unwarranted and nefarious actions" led to the restaurant's closure in May.

Kornna Kitchen opened in September 2023 "with a focus on serving" the Martinsville community. Johnson, who is Afri-

can American, noted that he focused on the eatery being "a place where everyone was welcome — a community place." He often offered free lunches to city employees, teachers, bus drivers, and local charities.

According to the filing, Fincher initially praised the business in an undated letter to the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC), writing that "Kornna Kitchen goes beyond just being a fine restaurant. The business frequently engages in community events and programs to promote" the city and attract new visitors.

The lawsuit alleged that the Martinsville Police Department later took actions that "severely impacted

Kornna's ability to operate and/or thrive," including cordoning off adjacent streets during weekends, which allegedly eliminated nearby parking and reduced weekend (See Former p. 12)

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School board approves grant application for sound amplification systems installation



The Henry County School Board approved an application for the 2025-2026 Title V Rural-Low Income School Funding for the installation of sound amplification systems at its Oct. 2 meeting.

By Taylor Boyd

The Henry County School Board approved the 2025-2026 Title V Rural-Low Income School Funding Application for the installation of sound amplification systems at its Oct. 2 meeting.

The grant funding would be \$240,764.91.

Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Lisa Millner said funds will be used to supplement and support the division's instructional program by installing the sound amplification systems.

"The use of classroom sound amplification systems is an evidence-based strategy that aligns closely with our district's priorities and identified needs. Research shows that improved classroom audio enhances literacy development, student engagement, and instructional clarity, particularly for students with hearing, language, or attention challenges," she said.

Ben Gravely, of the Iriswood District, asked if it was the typical amplification systems the division's used in the past.

Millner replied that they were similar, but not hard-wired like the school system's previously used.

"They're more up to date," she added.

In other matters, the board:

*Heard from Jonathan Martin, who introduced himself as a candidate running for the Blackberry District on the school board.

*Heard from Michelle Graham, who thanked the board for their work in their positions.

*Heard from Mary Martin, who thanked the board and the administration for their service and spoke about the new Standards of Learning (SOL) proficiency expectations.

*Heard a presentation from Sandville Elementary School Principal Joshua Eanes about the school's SOL scores, attendance rates, and students.

*Approved the consent agenda.

*Heard the superintendent's report.

*Heard committee reports.

*Approved the personnel report and addendum as presented.

*Approved the religious exemption as presented.

Member-At-Large Cherie Whitlow attended the meeting virtually.

Martin debuts children's book inspired by Fairy Stone State Park



J. David Martin reads his children's book, "A Fairystone Adventure," at the Henry County Administration building.

By Jessica Dillon

J. David Martin, EdD, a former member of the Henry County Board of Supervisors and school superintendent in both Henry and Patrick counties, held a live reading of his new book, "A Fairystone Adventure," on Sept. 27.

Several of Martin's former colleagues and friends attended the event, praising the author and his work in the community.

"We are just really appreciative of having a book that describes that in more detail. Thank you very much for the long time that you have worked in getting this today," said Karen Clark, a former coworker.

"He stood right beside us and worked with us, and we are so appreciative that for the public debut of his book, he was willing to come back here. It means a

lot to us," said another former coworker.

Jean Hairston, a former teacher, also celebrated Martin's leadership, sharing a fond anecdote about friendly banter over dress attire during their time working together.

Now living in Winchester to assist his family, Martin said he misses the area, noting that Northern Virginia has nothing on the local "hospitality," he said.

His book captures local folklore and the region's landscapes. According to the description, "In the captivating tale of "A Fairystone Adventure," Karen, an energetic and curious young girl, embarks on a summer vacation like no other. Her journey takes her to her grandparents' home, nestled in the beautiful landscapes of Henry County and

Patrick County, Virginia. Here, she uncovers a local legend that piques her curiosity and fuels her adventurous spirit."

Martin said he hopes the book will encourage readers to explore the region. "Yes, between Patrick and Henry, it's just a magical place. I'm hoping that by putting the website on the back of the book, people will get to experience it," he said. "Coming back here is always like coming home for me. We have so many friends here, and we just pick up where we left off the last time I was here. It is truly a place I call home."

"A Fairystone Adventure" is intended for children and is available for purchase online, including through Amazon. The book includes a website for Fairy Stone State Park to encourage families to visit.

Phase

(cont. from page 1)

connections are replaced. During construction, those residents and others in the surrounding neighborhoods may experience short, temporary water shutoffs as crews complete the work.

The Phase 4 contracts were awarded to Prilaman and Pace, and C.W. Cauley and Son. Together, they will continue the PSA's ongoing effort to modernize water infrastructure in Fieldale.

"This project reflects our commitment to reliable service and safe drinking water," said PSA General Manager Dale Wagoner. "By phasing this work, we are making long-term improvements while minimizing disruption to the community as much as possible."

The overall Fieldale Service Line Project is funded through a \$6.16 million grant from the Virginia Department of Health's Office of

Drinking Water (ODW). The grant, made possible through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), will allow the PSA to replace about 17,300 linear feet of outdated pipe, benefiting a total of 150 customers when the work is complete.

The Fieldale system, originally built during the textile industry's expansion, was constructed using galvanized steel and lead-jointed cast iron. After the 2003 closure of the Fieldcrest Mills plant, the PSA inherited the system, much of which had exceeded its useful life. The replacement pipes will be ductile iron, PVC, and high-density polyethylene which are modern materials that improve both durability and water quality.

For more information about the project, call the PSA at 276-634-4776.

Grace

(cont. from page 1)

out the bad ones, and took care of the patch. It takes a lot of work."

Hinchcliff said the permanent pavilion has been a longtime dream. "We've done this pumpkin patch for almost 19 years now, and we've always had a tent," she said. "Sometimes the weather took it, and sometimes it didn't. We are so grateful for a real structure that we can put over our volunteers."

The pumpkin patch is entirely run by volunteers, with all proceeds supporting local families through Grace Network's outreach programs. "We are so grateful to the community that comes together to help us — man the patch,

unload them, take care of them," Hinchcliff said.

Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson attended the dedication to honor Smith's memory. "He passed away recently, very unexpectedly, so this is a tribute to him," Lawson said. "Your proceeds are going to a very worthwhile cause — all of the good work that Grace Network does."

The Grace Network Pumpkin Patch is located at First Baptist Church, 23 Starling Ave., Martinsville. Hours are Monday through Friday from 1 to 7 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. The final day of the season will be Thursday, Oct. 31, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Medicare open enrollment scams

October marks the start of Medicare open enrollment, and unfortunately, the peak season for Medicare fraud. From October 15 to December 7, eligible beneficiaries can review options and make changes to their Medicare health and Part D prescription drug plans. But not every offer is what it seems.

Each year, criminals take advantage of open enrollment season by posing as insurance providers. They may call, email or show up offering free gifts or limited-time offers, all designed to steal your money, Medicare information, or even your identity.

At the same time, advances in modern medical technology create new opportunities for fraud criminals. Medicare beneficiaries should be cautious of devices advertised as medical monitors or promoted for uses they weren't designed for. To stay safe, rely only on equipment prescribed by your doctor.[SK1]

To protect yourself from Medicare schemes, avoid sharing personal information with anyone who contacts you unexpectedly about Medicare. Legitimate plans can only reach out if you've requested information or already have an existing relationship with them. Beneficiaries can safely compare legitimate plans and change enrollment by going to medicare.gov or by calling 800-633-4227.

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

Beekeeping program set for Oct. 14 at Bassett Historical Center

The Bassett Historical Center will host a beekeeping program at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 14, in the Susan L. Adkins Memorial Meeting Room.

Jay Hudson, a third-generation beekeeper with 16 years of experience, will lead the presentation. He will cover the history of beekeeping, the importance of honeybees in the ecosystem, the roles of bees within a colony, the components of a beehive and the challenges modern beekeepers face.

Hudson will also highlight how the mountains of Henry and Patrick counties make up a unique honey production region. Attendees will have the opportunity to sample a couple of local honey varieties.

The program is free and open to the public.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Meetings

Monday, October 13

City School Board Meeting, 6 p.m., Community Learning Center of MCPS Central Office, 746 Indian Trail, Martinsville.

Tuesday, October 14

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

Events:

Saturday, October 11

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

Monday, October 13

Library Board Meeting, 3 p.m., at the Collinsville Branch Library, 2540 Virginia Ave., Collinsville.

Tuesday, October 14

Beekeeping program in the Susan L. Adkins Memorial Meeting Room at the Bassett Historical Center, 10:30 a.m. Presenter Jay Hudson is a third generation beekeeper with 16 years of experience in beekeeping.

Saturday, October 18

Hamburger Steak Dinner, 4 -7 p.m. at Bassett Volunteer Fire Department, 3735 Fairystone Park Hwy., Bassett. Meal includes hamburger steak, fries, baked beans, slaw, roll and a drink for \$12 per plate. Eat in, or to-go plates available. All proceeds benefit the fire department.

The Martinsville/Henry County Veterans Service Organization, (M/HC VSO), will be having a Veterans Appreciation Picnic at Jack Dalton Park, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. All veterans and their families are invited. Free food, drinks and information on the various local veteran organizations.

Tuesday, October 21

The Martinsville-Henry County Republican Committee meets at 6:30 p.m. in the Republican Election Headquarters at Holiday Shopping Plaza. 1982 Virginia Avenue, Collinsville.

Saturday, October 25

Bonez and Booz, 4 - 10 p.m., Virginia Museum of Natural History, 21 Starling Ave., Martinsville.

Great Goblin Gallop, 8 a.m., Martinsville Public Schools School Board Office, 746 Indian Trail, Martinsville.

Halloween Hayride, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Jack Dalton Park, 130 Jack Dalton Road, Collinsville.

Masquerade Ball, 6-10 p.m. A variety of refreshments and drinks/punch as well as prizes for costumes, games, door prizes, photos, music, dance and more, Spencer Penn Center, 475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer. Age limit 13+ (Parents must keep a check on youngsters).

Saturday, November 8

The American Legion Homer Dillard Post # 78 will have its Annual Veterans Day Banquet at 5 pm. at New College Institute, (NCI), on Fayette Street, Martinsville. Tickets are required, and must be purchased in advance, for a \$ 30 donation. Call (276) 340-5169, or (276) 340-2640 for tickets.

Ongoing

Upward Basketball & Cheerleading - Boys & Girls 5 years old - 5th Grade - All basketball players must attend one in-person evaluation on one of the following dates. Monday, October 20 - 6- 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, November 8 – 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Thursday, November 20 - 6 - 7:30 p.m. Practices and games begin January 2026 at Fort Trial Baptist Church, 170 Oak Level Road, Stanleystown. Registration fee per child is \$68 before Oct 15; \$70 after. Register online: <https://registration.upward.org/UPW89227>. For more information contact Daniel Reed at 276.629.2964 or pastordreed81@gmail.com.

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.

The 30th annual Coat Drive for Kids is underway through Nov. 28. To donate a new or gently used coat, call Debra Parsons Buchanan at 276-358-1463 or drop them off at Hollywood Cinema or One-Hour Martinizing on Rives Road.

Uptown Pub Run, Mondays at 6.p.m., meets at The Ground Floor, Martinsville.

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

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

gna, 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 mhc-dcva.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.

Arrest made in Dollar General shooting incident

One man turned himself in in connection with a recent shooting incident at a store in Bassett.

Charles Edward Mills, 19, reported to the Henry County Sheriff's Office around 9:30 p.m., on October 7, in connection with the shooting that occurred on October 6, at the Dollar General located at 3874 Stones Dairy Road, Bassett.

Mills was taken into custody without incident and charged with two counts each Malicious Wounding and Use a Firearm in the Commission of a Felony; and one count Attempted Robbery in connection with the incident which took place in the parking lot on the side of the building away from the main

shopping entrance.

Sheriff's deputies arriving at the scene located two males suffering from gunshot wounds. One 20 years old, and the other victim 21 years old. One victim was transported by rescue personnel to a local hospital for treatment, while the second victim was airlifted to a trauma center for advanced medical care.

Evidence collected during the investigation indicates that gunfire was exchanged between the two victims and another suspect or suspects.

"Our investigators worked tirelessly through the night following up on leads and processing

evidence. Thanks to their dedication — and the cooperation of our community — a suspect is now in custody. We remain committed to holding everyone involved accountable and ensuring the safety of our citizens." Sheriff Wayne Davis.

Mills is currently incarcerated at the Henry County Adult Deten-

tion Center without bond.

The investigation remains ongoing. Anyone with information about this incident is encouraged to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at (276) 638-8751 or Crime Stoppers at (276) 63-CRIME (276-632-7463). Information leading to an arrest and conviction may be eligible for a cash reward.

Foster Farms recall expanded to include ground turkey products

Foster Poultry Farms has expanded its recall to include about 3.8 million pounds of chicken corn dog and ground turkey-on-a-stick products that may contain pieces of wood, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

Details of the recall were updated Oct. 6, 2025, to include the ground turkey-on-a-stick items.

The recalled products were produced between July 30, 2024, and Aug. 4, 2025, and shipped nationwide to retail stores, institutions, and food donation programs. The items bear

establishment number "P-6137B" inside the USDA mark of inspection or printed on the packaging.

The recall was issued after several consumer complaints, including five reports of injuries. FSIS urges consumers not to eat the products and to throw them away or return them to the place of purchase.

For a full list of recalled products and labels, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls.

Consumers with questions can contact Foster Farms Consumer Affairs at 1-800-338-8051 or info@fosterfarms.com.

One charged in connection with robbery



Thornton Burnette

The Henry County/Martinsville 911 Center received a call on September 27 reporting an armed subject vandalizing the J&H Market located at 870 Preston Road. Deputies responded and learned that a male subject, identified as Thornton Burnette, 41, of 101 Tanyard Road, had been inside the store's game room when he became irate after losing money.

Witnesses reported that Burnette, who was visibly armed with a firearm, demanded money back from employees. After briefly leaving the store, Burnette allegedly returned armed with both a firearm and cordless angle grinder. Witnesses alleged he threatened to harm others before using the grinder to damage gaming machines inside the store.

The incident occurred in a room

that allegedly appeared to be used for illegal gambling. The Henry County Sheriff's Office was previously unaware of the existence of this gambling room or the gaming machines. That matter is ongoing and still under investigation.

Video surveillance confirmed Burnette's actions, showing the grinder being used on the gaming machine and then smashing the screen. Multiple employees and customers fled the store in fear for their safety. Through investigation, deputies were able to identify Burnette and determine that he is a convicted felon.

Burnette was charged with Destruction of Property, Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon, Use of a Firearm in the Commission of a Felony, Possession of Burglary Tools, and Attempted Robbery in connection with the incident.

Henry County Sheriff's deputy L.T. Adams arrested Burnette at his place of employment in Martinsville on September 29, around 9:39 a.m. He was taken into custody without incident. He is currently being held at the Henry County Adult Detention Center with no bond.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information regarding this incident is encouraged to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at 276-638-8751 or Crimestoppers at 63-CRIME (632- 7463).

Thank You for reading
Henry County Enterprise

OPINION

Making America Safer!

A core tenet of making America safe is securing our land and maritime borders.

That means reversing the Biden-Harris open border policies that unleashed an illegal immigration explosion and facilitated the ongoing fentanyl crisis.

We are less than a year into the Trump Administration, and border crossings are significantly down compared to the Biden-Harris Administration.

According to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), in August of 2023 border encounters at our Southwest Land border hit more than 232,000.

Under Trump for August of 2025? 9,740!

Republicans believe that enhanced border measures means safer American communities! More backup is on the way.

The Department of Homeland Security is preparing to build 10 new miles of border wall in San Diego.

It is one entry point that tends to see heavy levels of illegal immigration.

The new border wall will include 7.6 miles of 30-foot-tall primary barriers topped with anti-climb features.

Funding from this project is a result of the reconciliation bill that Republicans passed this summer. Tens of billions of dollars will go towards projects like this to secure our southern border.

Additional funding is directed to drug interdiction efforts. CBP reported an increase of 9.2% from July to August in the nationwide seizure of cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, fentanyl and marijuana.

A more secure U.S.-Mexico border helps choke off drug trafficking routes that Mexican cartels exploit.

Many of the illicit narcotics the cartels smuggle in, like fentanyl, pose a threat to the health and safety



Morgan Griffith

Representative

of American communities.

Interestingly, Communist China plays a role in this process.

China sells to those same cartels the precursor chemicals that are used to produce fentanyl.

President Trump has voiced his concerns about China's role in the fentanyl crisis, and I support his actions to confront China.

The Trump Administration is also aggressively pursuing illicit Chinese vaping products.

Back in April, Republican Attorneys General, including Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares, requested formal help from the federal government to combat the rush of illicit Chinese vaping products flooding into the United States.

The rise in illegal, flavored Chinese e-cigarettes that distributors and retailers sell to minors is particularly alarming. Many of these unregulated products sneak into the United States via mislabeled packaging or in a manner designed to evade detection by CBP or other regulatory entities.

This challenge poses a serious health risk to America's youth.

Officials from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Department of Justice (DOJ) and other agencies faced intense grilling from lawmakers on both sides of the aisle during the Biden era for a lack of enforcement and regulation to shield American consumers from these illicit products.

One FDA official even left the agency

because of the agency's failure to combat China flooding U.S. markets with illegal vapes.

But a new sheriff is in town.

Trump officials in tandem with our law enforcement agencies recently launched a nationwide operation to clean our communities of these illicit vaping products that are distributed and sold at retailers across the country.

Millions of illicit e-cigarettes were recently seized in what is considered the largest-ever seizure of this kind.

Additionally, the FDA has communicated with dozens of importers and entry filers in an attempt to address the flow of these illicit products and protect public health.

In a recent interview with WJLA, FDA Commissioner Dr. Marty Makary said: "This pipeline of illegal Chinese products is now a top priority..."

He further said: "... We have had something called 'port shopping,' which means the illegal vapes come in, our FDA inspectors look at them, and then, in the past, I found out that the FDA was putting them back on the ships while the Chinese manufacturers were just going to the next port and a 100% of it was getting in. It was a joke. They were laughing at us."

Makary told me he is using the FDA's law enforcement authority to crack down. More law enforcement actions on this front are expected.

I commend the work to crack down on these products. I encourage them to keep pushing on this issue.

Not only is it important to seize these products, but also to apprehend those responsible and pursue criminal charges when possible.

As Chairman of the Health Subcommittee, I am committed to protecting America's youth from harmful illicit vaping products.

Whether by land or sea, open border policies do not serve our health, well-being or safety!

I will continue to support actions that help protect America by intercepting drug trafficking and combatting China's illicit peddling operations.

Post-truth America

It surprises me to say it, but I miss the days when one of the worst things you had to deal with from politicians was spin.

Remember spin? Bill O'Reilly used to claim his show was "The No-Spin Zone," making it the most inaccurately named media property since "The NeverEnding Story."

For an example of spin, let's say Rep. Bob Politics has proposed a 1% sales tax to fund free lunches for schoolchildren. A pundit opposed to Rep. Politics might ask the question, "Why does Rep. Bob Politics want to punish his constituents with yet another new tax?" Meanwhile, a pundit in favor of the proposal might ask, "Bob, why does your opponent want to take food out of the mouths of hungry schoolchildren, whom I've been told are our future?"

Both of these takes are misrepresentations of the Representative's proposal. However — and this is important — both takes have their basis in agreed-upon facts. Both acknowledge that the Rep. has proposed a tax increase designed to feed children. The divergence is with how those facts are interpreted.

It seems almost quaint compared to where we are now.

For an example, take our current government shutdown.

On Oct. 1, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said that, "The Democrats shut down the government because President Trump and the Republicans will not force American taxpayers to pay for free health care for illegal aliens."

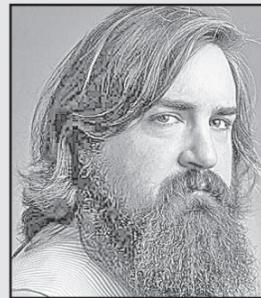
Vice President J.D. Vance then added that, "The Chuck Schumer, AOC wing of the Democratic Party shut down the government because they said to us, 'We will open the government, but only if you give billions of dollars of funding for health care for illegal aliens.'"

This has been the Republican messaging on the shutdown since before the shutdown even began.

Also, it is completely false.

Where does this falsehood come from? When Congress can't agree on a budget bill, it can pass a "continuing resolution," which keeps the government from shutting down while the budget is being discussed and ultimately agreed upon. The Democrats proposed a continuing resolution on Sept. 17, and on page 57, it called for a repeal of a provision in Trump's 2025 budget bill that would restrict Medicaid eligibility for non-citizens. However, the specific provision the Democrats want to repeal pertains specifically to noncitizens who are in the U.S. legally, not those in the country illegally. So when the Republicans claim the Democrats want to provide billions in healthcare funding for "illegal aliens," it is, by definition, an outright lie.

However, this lie does an excellent job of distracting Trump's supporters from the actual reason for the shutdown, which is that Democrats want to extend tax



By Ben R. Williams

credits to make health insurance premiums more affordable, which is something that would benefit most U.S. citizens, Trump supporters included.

As an aside, even if it were true that the Democrats were trying to secure healthcare for undocumented immigrants, I personally wouldn't have a problem with it. I subscribe to the radical theory that you shouldn't make someone bleed out in a hospital parking lot just because they were born on the other side of an invisible line. Also, there's Leviticus 19:33-34, which states that, "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God."

I apologize if that radical statement offends anyone.

Anyway, lies are far more pernicious than spin. As an example, if someone said that I once set fire to a building while a former Vice-Presidential candidate was inside of it, I could argue against that spin. I could explain that the fire was completely accidental, I put it out without incident, and to my knowledge, Sen. Tim Kaine never even found about it (it's a long story).

However, if someone accused me of being the Zodiac Killer, my only rebuttal would be, "That's a lie!" And you know who else would respond that way? The Zodiac Killer.

Jonathan Swift once wrote that, "It often happens, that if a lie be believed only for an Hour, it has done its Work, and there is no Farther occasion for it. Falsehood flies, and the Truth comes limping after it; so that when Men come to be undeceiv'd, it is too late; the Jest is over, and the Tale has had its Effect."

In other words, a lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes. After a great lie has been told, what percentage of people will hear the correction? And increasingly, what percentage will even believe it, despite clear evidence?

What does it look like when half of the nation abandons any allegiance to truth and becomes immersed in a world of lies and fantasy?

After quoting the Bible and Jonathan Swift, I will close with a quote from a '70s dish soap commercial: "You're soaking in it."

Column Sponsored by: Dr. Mensink

SNHU releases Dean's, President's lists

Lisa Higgs of Martinsville was named to Southern New Hampshire University's Summer 2025 Dean's List. The summer terms run from May to August.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.500 to 3.699 for the reporting term are named to the Dean's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

Southern New Hampshire University also congratulated the following students on being named to

the Summer 2025 President's List.

Andrew Norris of Ridgeway, Kevin Davis of Ridgeway, Dante Maniace of Martinsville, Matthew Perea of Collinsville, Devin Desselle of Collinsville, and Erika Deal of Bassett.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

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Crabtree and P&HCC outline proposal rationale



Dr. Mark Crabtree (Contributed)

By Taylor Boyd

Dr. Mark Crabtree addressed questions about the 'Proposed New College Institute Resolution Establishing the Patrick & Henry Community College Center (P&HCC) for Workforce and Economic Development at the Baldwin Building' resolution.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors approved adding the resolution to the county's annual legislative agenda.

Before submitting the resolution to the supervisors, Crabtree said he assessed community needs and determined the higher education environment had changed significantly since NCI's founding. "The communities' efforts must evolve to improve the lives of our citizens," he wrote in an email.

Crabtree said individual discussions were held with local leaders Jay Dickens, Lee Prillaman and Del. Eric Phillips, R-Martinsville.

"We eventually had a discussion with P&HCC President Greg Hodges, who envisioned a transformation of the NCI building and its programming as a part of P&HCC," Crabtree said.

"Dr. Hodges and I were actually talking about what he envisioned as a good path forward and what he wanted to do. He needs the space, and he could use it," he said. He noted P&HCC was the top partner considered.

Crabtree said many community members expressed support after the information became public. "At that point in time, I said, 'Hey, can you give us a letter of support. Let us know if you feel that way,'" he said.

Regarding communication with NCI board members, Crabtree said the law limits discussions to one-on-one interactions. "I've talked to all of them. Nobody's been left out completely. The majority of the board members from Henry County and Martinsville are strongly in favor of his proposal," he said.

Dickens, Prillaman, and Crabtree were "the three that really were the nidus of figuring out what do we need to do and what makes good sense. Some people may have gotten a little upset that I didn't get to them first. Some people may want to make things political, which is unfortunate, but that happens, it's because you got politicians on the board, but the thing is, you have to ask each individual how they feel about it."

In an Oct. 6 email, Crabtree described the plan as a way to accelerate regional economic development while maintaining NCI programs and encouraging the NCI Foundation to support the P&HCC Foundation.

Crabtree noted that since NCI is a state agency, moving ahead with his proposal requires legislative action and continuing NCI's budget in the VCCS budget as described in the resolution.

"Our intent is that all the great programs and initiatives at NCI will continue in the community college system, and we need to keep the pedal to the medal on these programs as this settles out," he wrote.

P&HCC supports proposal

P&HCC President Greg Hodges said that if the proposal moves forward, keeping NCI locally managed benefits the community.

"We believe we are best positioned to offer programming that serves the members of our community because of our ongoing collaborative partnership with local businesses and regional economic development organizations. Patrick & Henry is honored to be the community's college and we will continue to be the educational catalyst that provides access to economic prosperity for our community," he said.

If the proposal is approved, P&HCC's leadership "would create a unique opportunity to accelerate the economic development of the region while aligning several regional workforce development programs and initiatives as well as advanced learning and community development, including bringing advanced education opportunities to the area, according to the resolution.

In 2006, NCI was officially established by state charter as an educational institution, with its primary mission to expand educational opportunities, develop a skilled workforce, and diversify the region's economy, which had historically relied on tobacco, furniture and textiles. NCI sought to achieve these goals by partnering with other higher education institutions and engaging with both public and private

Support

(cont. from page 1)

estimated 30-35 students are currently going through the program.

"We're actually somewhat paying for them, too. Henry County Schools is paying Longwood for these folks to graduate and work for us," he said.

Martin believes stopping this program would be a detriment to the area, given the current nationwide teacher shortage.

In addition to Longwood basically having exclusive access to NCI's second floor in the evenings, Martin, who is employed by Genedge — the former A.L. Philpott Advanced Manufacturing Center, which is among NCI's tenants, said the building also serves as a space for student, community, and business events.

"There's all sorts of little tie-ins that we've had through that building, especially over the last few years," he said.

He discussed the issue indirectly at a school board meeting and is currently debating about raising it at a board of supervisors meeting. He said the supervisors failed to discuss the resolution with the local school divisions or even NCI, before approving it.

"The Henry County Board of Supervisors also had no contact with Joe Sumner," executive director at NCI, "or any of them," Martin said. The board also did not discuss the issue with NCI's tenants.

The supervisor's action was in response to a letter from Dr. Mark Crabtree, a member of NCI's board. The letter was also signed by two other community leaders — Jay Dickens and Lee Prillaman.

The board approves a legislative agenda, which has been described as a 'wish list' of sorts, annually.

"The agenda is a list of legislative priorities that the board would like the General Assembly to take action on," Brandon Martin, the county's Public Information Officer, said.

Wagoner said "the board's position is that for two General Assembly sessions, the governor did not include money for NCI, and we don't want to see the building set there unused. The board thought it was in the best interest of the community to transition oversight to P&HCC so it can continue to be an educational institution."

Funding context

NCI's primary funding comes from approximately \$3.1 million a year in state appropriations, Sumner said.

Over the last two General Assembly budgets, funding for NCI was stricken from the Governor's budget. However, the funding was restored by the General Assembly.

NCI Chief Advancement Officer Olivia Garrett said the funding issues have certainly created some confusion over the past two years.

"Then on the flipside, it's been encouraging that the General Assembly has supported and reinstated funding over the past two years. I think it sometimes gets lost in the other noise that the original House of Delegates budget last year gave us an additional million dollars in funding, which would have been very helpful in specific to supporting students, hiring a student success coordinator, to developing new programs and partnerships," she said.

That additional million was whittled down to \$500,000 in the final House of Delegates and State Senate budget before it was vetoed by Gov. Glenn Youngkin.

Sumner said the ongoing public discourse has been that NCI is struggling and is not performing well.

"I just cannot comprehend what else we can do to get the message out that the numbers have shown that our programs have grown exponentially, that our new programs have been successful, and we're operating on a sustainable model. I'm just unsure of what it will take to convince the general population to ask NCI how the programs are going, because they're going well. Everything is projecting in a positive manner," Sumner said.

NCI leadership says board process bypassed

Like Martin, Sumner said he was not informed that the resolution would be presented to the board of supervisors.

"This has not been presented to our board. There was scheduled to be a board meeting on September 11, and that board meeting was canceled due to a very horrific cyber incident. Our virtual Zoom call was bombarded with pornographic images, hateful, racist messaging, vulgar displays," Sumner said.

He said the meeting was rescheduled, but the proposal had not yet gone before the full NCI board.

"This was a proposal from a small group of three individuals that were making this proposal to the (NCI) board, and have since taken it public," he said.

Garrett said the board has a committee process for considering proposals. "That will be where we get to hear from the board members about their thoughts and opinions on the proposal," she said.

The Workforce and Academic Committee is tentatively scheduled to discuss the proposal on Oct. 15. If approved, it would then go to the Executive Committee in November. If the proposal makes it through those two committees, it would then be considered by the full 15-member board, which includes five legislative members and 10 nonlegislative or citizen members. The full board is scheduled to meet in January in Richmond.

Other partners and tenants express concern

In addition to Genedge, several organizations and businesses rent office space from NCI, including Martinsville's Adult Education, the National Alliance of Mental Illness, and the National Society of Black Engineers.

Garrett said tenants' initial response to the resolution was confusion about the future "because some of them hadn't been talked to, and the way some of the initial reports were framed, it seemed like it was a done deal versus our committee process through the board. I think it's mostly been seeking clarification of what's really going on," Garrett said.

"We also provide space for various Divine Nine organizations, and partner with them on scholarships and different things of that nature," Sumner said. "There are those that have a permanent daily space in our building and then those that have their offices elsewhere, but they use us on a daily or weekly basis for some of their operations through our partnerships, where we may have trainings or different community events."

Sumner said NCI's programs have grown and are operating sustainably despite public discourse suggesting otherwise. He noted the EdgeUTech library, which includes robots, laptops, and programmable controllers, has served over 800 Henry County students in elementary computer science programs.

"We look to offer that to any schools that are interested," he added.

Garrett noted NCI was named the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) state-wide champion last year because of its work with clients in both work-based internship learning and employment opportunities.

Board chairman emphasizes governance

NCI Chairman Eric Jones said the General Assembly ultimately decides the institute's governance because NCI was established by law.

"We do have some authorities, but to unilaterally actively dictate a merger is something that we are not chartered to do. My goal was to hear the idea at the Sept. 11 meeting, cause there's nothing wrong with ideas, and let it go through our processes to get back to the executive committee. We don't make the decision. We could at most provide a recommendation to the General Assembly," he said.

With that meeting disrupted, Jones said Dr. Crabtree's idea wasn't heard by the board before it went public. "It kind of got ahead of the board a little bit. We have a proper way to weigh in and give the full body enough time to take in the information and make decisions," he said.

Jones thinks many are wondering what the board's decision and vote will be.

"I've heard many people talk about, 'what is your vote going to be?' I'm just reminding people that we have to respect the democratic process that the Commonwealth of Virginia sets up and establishes for these types of things. The fact that NCI is established by a code section, I don't want to mislead anyone in the region that our board carries a decision authority to change the law. We don't," he said.

Crabtree's idea is independent of the board, Jones said.

"Dr. Crabtree has been very, very adamant that this is his idea. He was going to make his case to the board, and I think independently, he's making his case to the community. Our board hasn't heard it yet. Our board is trying to establish the time and place to hear it," he said, adding even after that, the proposal must go through the legislative process of getting a sponsor and being presented on the floor of the General Assembly.

Jones said NCI's Board of Directors has been consistent in its stance that it's still going to hear Crabtree's idea during a formal meeting.

"No one... is making public remarks about whether it's a good idea or whether it's a bad idea. Multiple members of the board, especially the legislative members of the board, have stressed, 'Hey, we've got to hear this out through the process.' We want to ask the questions on the platform that our board is established," he said.

Jones said every board member will get the chance to express their opinions on their thoughts about Crabtree's actions when the board meets.

"I just want to make sure that the people of Martinsville and Henry County look" at the NCI board and don't have "a misconception of our authorities and our power," he said.

sector organizations in the region and in the Commonwealth. It aimed to be a catalyst for economic and community transformation by leveraging resources and facilitating the development of technology and a trained workforce needed for new economic enterprises.

NCI collaborated with state universities in its early years, bringing in faculty and paying universities for partnerships. Enrollment grew from 118 students in 2006-2007 to 329 students in 2017-2018. NCI helped 403 students obtain bachelor's and master's degrees during that time. Outreach efforts were con-

ducted, making at least 5,000 contacts annually with students and families. NCI partnered with Virginia colleges to offer degrees in fields important to the Southern Virginia region, according to the resolution.

NCI also offered K-12 programming and experiential learning opportunities. Facilities grew into the classroom building on Franklin Street, the lab on Fayette Street and the Jefferson Plaza; and Longwood University provides two remaining degree programs at NCI serving a total of twenty-seven students in the spring semester of 2024.

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RISE Summit returns to Danville in November

After a successful debut year in 2024, the RISE Regional Innovation Summit for Entrepreneurs (RISE Summit) will return to Danville this year on Saturday, November 1. This regional conference promises another dynamic day of insights, learning, and networking designed to help both aspiring and established entrepreneurs and business owners thrive.

Hosted at the Institute for Advanced Learning & Research, the RISE Summit 2025 will feature a variety of inspirational speakers, interactive breakout sessions, and networking opportunities. Sessions will cover topics such as securing funding through loans, grants, and contracts, digital marketing, financial man-

agement, and technology adoption. Conference tracks are available for early-stage startups and existing businesses aiming to grow or scale.

Early bird registration is now open, with discounted tickets available for \$55 per person through September 25. Beginning September 26, the ticket price will increase to \$65 per person. Registration closes on October 25.

"The insight from the speakers was so encouraging and applicable," said Cissy Martin, a Southern Virginia entrepreneur who attended the 2024 RISE Summit. "The people I met while in the classes and at the tables in between classes were so interesting and inspir-

ing. Great location, layout, easy to find classes, food was great, time was perfect!"

The RISE Summit is presented by RISE Collaborative, a regional entrepreneurship initiative hosted by the SOVA Innovation Hub in partnership with the Longwood Small Business Development Center. The event is made possible through the generous support of partners and sponsors across the region, including GO Virginia, Community Investment Collaborative, the Controlled Environment Agriculture Innovation Center at IALR, and Retire-Path.

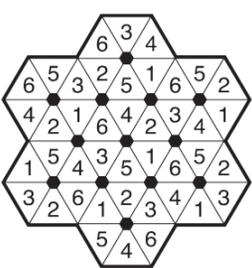
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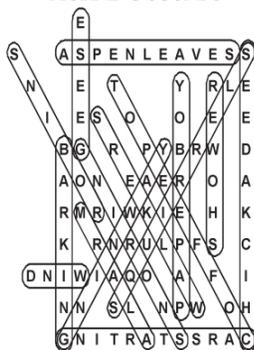
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DIRECTIONS - From Memorial Blvd in Martinsville, turn onto Starling Avenue, right on Forest Street then left on Keel Street. Keel Street is a dead end road so parking is limited. Please be considerate and not park in a neighbor's driveway!

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Crossing the Lines

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

Board votes 3-2 against residency requirement for EMS coordinator

The Patrick County Board of Supervisors voted against a resolution that would have required the county's Emergency Services Coordinator to live within Patrick County, 3-2, on Sept. 29.

During the special-called meeting, Vice Chairman Andrew Overby of the Dan River District and Clayton Kendrick of the Mayo River District supported the resolution. Chairman Jonathan Wood of the Peters Creek District, Steve Marshall of the Blue Ridge District, and Doug Perry of the Smith River District opposed it.

Perry said the position will primarily be administrative, though the coordinator



Jonathan Wood, chairman of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors (left), and Vice Chairman Andrew Overby disagreed on the proposal to require the Emergency Services Coordinator to live in the county.

may need to respond to some emergency calls to maintain oversight of EMS operations. "But are we going to be re-

quiring them to get up in the middle of the night and run a rescue call," he asked.

Overby said he did not believe

that expectation existed, but Perry disagreed and cited examples of calls that could arise anywhere in the county, in-

cluding accidents or hazardous spills on major roads. "I'm not so sure that it should have to be a requirement to spe-

cifically live in the county," he said, though he suggested residence should be in close proximity to the county to allow the coordinator to be in the county within a certain amount of time.

E-911 Committee Chairman and former Emergency Services Coordinator Steve Allen asked whether the job title referred to EMS or Emergency Management Coordinator.

County Administrator Beth Simms confirmed the title is Emergency Services Coordinator, which includes fire-related duties.

Crystal Harris, a former board member and member of the Smith River Rescue Squad, said that it includes fire and fire departments.

Woolwine festival to mark 45 years of community, music, and apple butter

The Woolwine Fire Department will hold its 45th annual October Community Festival from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 11, at the Woolwine Fire Department.

Admission is free.

Department member and President of the Ladies Auxiliary Connie Goode said the festival is the department's biggest fundraiser of the year.

"We get a little bit of money from the county, but other than that," the squad doesn't receive funding. "We are not a

paid staff or 100 percent supported by the county or the government, so this is how we pay for gas, diesel, training equipment, gear, and whatever we need," she said.

Jordan T. Morrison & the Foothill Boys, Larry Sigmon & the Virginia Girls, and the Friday Night Band are each set to perform twice at the festival.

Food like hot dogs, chicken BBQ sandwiches, fried apple pies, desserts, beverages, and apple butter will be available for purchase.

Craft vendors are welcome to set up for free. "They just need to be there and set up by 10 a.m.," she said.

While apple butter will be sold at the festival, because of its popularity, Goode said a pre-purchase list is available for those who want to ensure they get a jar. To get on the list, contact any member of the department or visit its Facebook page at Facebook.com/WoolwineVolunteerFireDepartment.

For more information, call Goode at (276) 229-8241.

Centenarian veterans honored as Veterans Day Parade Grand Marshals



A float from last year's Veterans Day Parade is pictured. This year's event will be held on Saturday, November 8, in Stuart. The program will be held after the parade at the Hooker Building on Woodland Drive.

Two 100-year-old World War II Army veterans will lead this year's Veterans Day Parade in Stuart as Grand Marshals on Nov. 8.

Turner Thompson, an Ararat native and resident, and Peter Kooper, who served in the Dutch Army, will share the honor. Kooper also has ties to Patrick County through his daughter, Astrid Cole.

The Patrick County Ruritan Clubs, working with local veterans, have been

organizing the parade for the second year. Woolwine Community Ruritan Club president David Belcher said they were surprised by last year's turnout.

"We had no idea we would have as many as we did," Belcher said. "For a first year of putting it on, we couldn't have been more pleased. The weather was perfect, and the folks lining the streets to pay homage to our veterans was heartwarming."

The Ruritans said they learned a lot

last year about what works and what could be improved upon. They are working to spread the word more widely this year, with clubs canvassing their communities to be sure as many veterans as possible are aware of the event. Members also distributed flyers at the Patrick County Agricultural Fair, and Zone 1 Ruritan Governors Pamela and Kevin Smith have visited local American Legion and VFW posts to encourage participation.

1-3-5-7

1-3-5-7

1-3-5-7

1-3-5-7

1-4-7

MOST Affordable Cinema

\$5 tickets

Hollywood Cinema
beside Walmart
Martinsville 276-656-3456



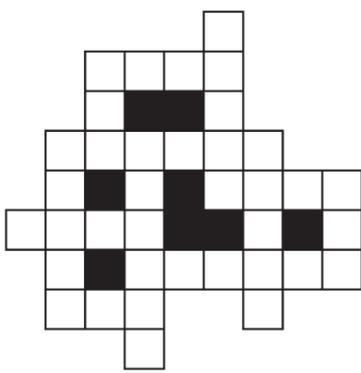
PUZZLE TIME



FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

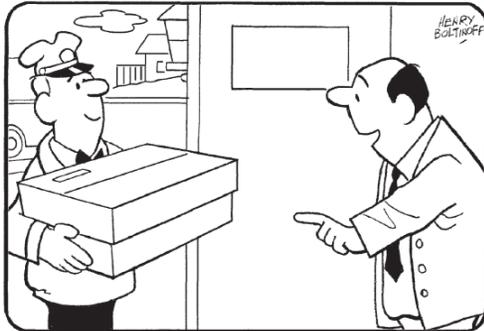


- IGG
- PIDANK
- DRUNO
- ♥NSGI
- GREEDI
- UDD
- ♥OPRM
- ♥ESPRI
- PPA
- KOGGIN
- NEGIK
- ♥RPDO

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. Box is smaller. 2. Arm is longer. 3. Tie is longer. 4. Thumb is moved. 5. Man has more hair. 6. Cap is a different shape.

MAGIC MAZE

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

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

- Alarm
- Aspen leaves
- Barking
- Cars starting
- Chickadees
- Coffee pot
- Geese
- Paper boy
- Robins
- Shower
- Snoring
- Squirrels
- Walkers
- Wind
- Yawning

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Super Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Boots up again
 - 9 Spill-cleaning implement
 - 15 Manages OK
 - 20 Nontraditional protagonist
 - 21 Interview With History author Fallaci
 - 22 —garde
 - 23 Kamala Harris is his veep
 - 24 Guys in the petroleum industry
 - 25 San Diego major leaguer
 - 26 Clearasil may clear it up
 - 27 Hands-on program for law students
 - 30 Highest point
 - 31 Vowel sound in "tent" or "peg"
 - 33 Made efforts to come from behind
 - 36 Bieber who co-hosted "Drop the Mic"
 - 39 Put on a musical staff
 - 40 Measure of temperature plus humidity
 - 44 Exaggerated tales
 - 49 Passing reference
 - 50 Get nude
 - 51 Cargo weight units
 - 52 Heartbeat frequency
 - 53 ALF et al.
 - 56 Tahitian wrap
 - 57 Alabama speedway city
 - 58 "I Am —" (reality show starring Jenner)
 - 59 Bluish form of oxygen
 - 60 People plundering
 - 61 After a while
 - 62 Frilly fabric
 - 63 Tightrope walkers, e.g.
 - 64 Kind of chimpanzee
 - 65 Mork's planet
 - 66 1955
 - 67 16th-century Spanish ship
 - 68 Restoration to factory defaults
 - 69 "Yes, I'm 100% for it!"
 - 70 They may follow right jabs
 - 73 Deterrents to auto thefts
 - 74 Balcony cry from Juliet
 - 75 "The Scarlet Letter" protagonist
 - 76 Early 1940s, politically
 - 82 Draws a bead on
 - 87 Part of i.e.
 - 88 Bulbs controlled with phone apps
 - 91 Acronym comparable to "carpe diem"
 - 92 Irritated
 - 95 Storm into
 - 96 Dog food brand
 - 98 Each
 - 99 Less original
 - 100 Full of life
 - 101 John of farm equipment
 - 102 Esteems
 - 103 Some pastries
 - 255 Yellowfin
 - 256 90-Down, in Hawaii
 - 257 Apt to vote Republican
 - 258 It has limbs
 - 259 Aria, e.g.
 - 260 Like sheep
 - 261 Writer Jong
 - 262 Actress Meg or Jennifer
 - 263 Mrs. Eisenhower
 - 264 Nonstop
 - 265 Fail to stay calm
 - 266 Salary ceiling
 - 267 Eggs, formally
 - 268 Asian noodle dish with peanuts
 - 269 On the way
 - 270 Central Asian plains
 - 271 Highest point
 - 272 Many a Bach choral work
 - 273 The thing right here
 - 274 Actor Peter O—
 - 275 PC key abbr.
 - 276 Vows heard at weddings
 - 277 "Mexico Set" novelist
 - 278 Deighton
 - 279 Boba Fett captured him
 - 280 Aaron's son, in the Bible
 - 281 Genre for Beck and Nirvana, in brief
 - 282 Tommy — (power pop band)
 - 283 Mistaken beliefs
 - 284 Official doing taxing work
 - 285 Sowing machines
 - 286 They fill job positions
 - 287 Does' mates
 - 288 Rounded edge, as on a staircase
 - 289 Royal homes
 - 290 Dine at a friend's house, say
 - 291 Transverse rafter-joining timber
 - 292 Easy walks
 - 293 Many bathroom floor installers
 - 294 Locale of Hudson Bay
 - 295 Don of TV announcing
 - 296 Legendary Rhine siren
 - 297 Single-wheel load carriers
 - 298 Peel that changes from green to yellow
 - 299 Sprinted, e.g.
 - 300 Polenta grain
 - 301 WWW page code
 - 302 Calendar box
 - 303 Decreased
 - 304 Tending to cause wear
 - 305 New Jersey city opposite Manhattan
 - 306 Jagged cliff
 - 307 Meddling sorts
 - 308 Sect in "Witness"
 - 309 Made a dash for
 - 310 1991 Daytona 500 winner Ernie
 - 311 Novelist
 - 312 Avian mimics
 - 313 Part of ESE
 - 314 "The Sandbox" dramatist
 - 315 Edward
 - 316 Some tadpoles, in time
 - 317 Hat's place
 - 318 Sushi staple
 - 319 Drop the ball
 - 320 Coloring stuff
 - 321 Buddy, in Burgundy

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- The atomic clock known as the NIST-F1 Cesium Fountain Clock, created by the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Colorado, is so accurate that it won't gain or lose a second in 20 million years.
- Compared to the production of standard paper, recycled paper production reduces air pollution to up to 73%.
- The Towel Museum in Japan showcases a vast collection of towels from different countries, each with its unique designs and cultural significance.
- Lobsters pee out of their face.
- A crow funeral is much like a human funeral — the birds gather around a fallen fellow crow, call to each other and pay close attention to their late peer.
- The tradition of a wedding cake topper originated in ancient Rome, where figurines depicting the bride and groom were used for good luck.
- Female turkeys don't gobble.
- Matthias Buchinger, known as the Little Man of Nuremberg, was born without hands or feet and was only 29 inches tall, but still managed to perform numerous magic feats and illusions, including the famous cups-and-balls routine.
- The first knitting union, founded in Paris in 1527, allowed only men as members.
- Will Shortz, a crossword editor for The New York Times, designed a degree program at Indiana University in enigmatology, or the study and science of puzzles.
- Ancient Romans gargled with urine to whiten their teeth.
- Since the prosthetics Heath Ledger wore on his mouth during filming of "The Joker" would loosen as he spoke, he kept them on by frequently licking his lips, a trait that suited his character and was therefore incorporated into the film.

Thought for the Day: "The battles that count aren't the ones for gold medals. The struggles within yourself — the invisible battles inside all of us — that's where it's at." — Jesse Owens

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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: ◆

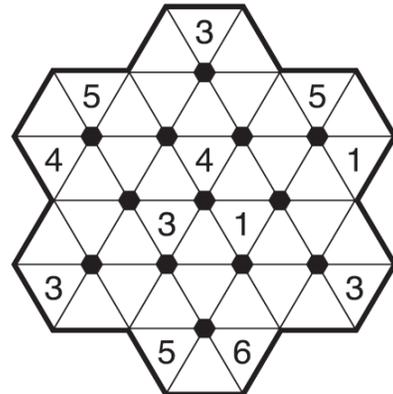
- ◆ Moderate
- ◆◆ Challenging
- ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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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.

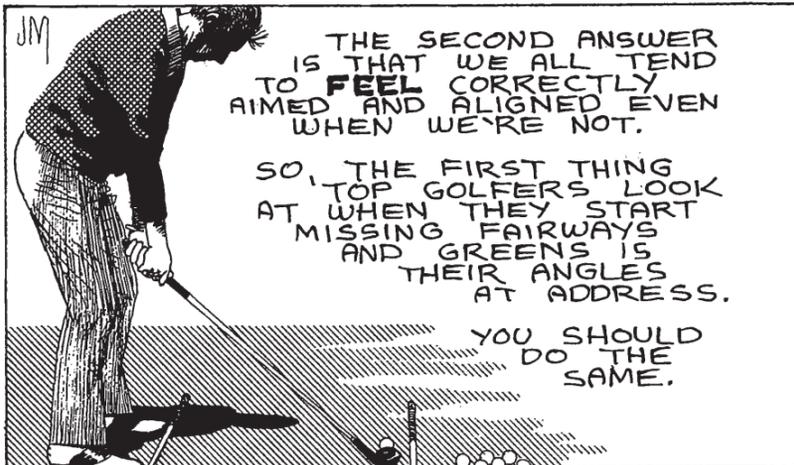
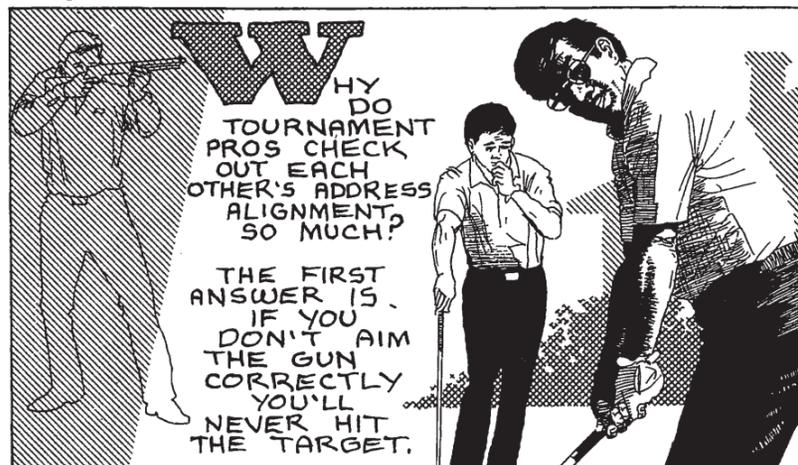


DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

- ◆ Easy
- ◆◆ Medium
- ◆◆◆ Difficult

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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!

- Filth: MIRGE
- Grasp: HALEND
- Find: ELTACO
- Expire: RESHIP

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Bulldog Beat

Issue IV

We've been thinking about upcoming events like the talent show and the geography bee. It was a good week! **T'Kari Breedlove, 8th grade**

In science, we worked on energy transfers. We had an assembly early Thursday morning—our speaker was Coach Kirby. Thank you to him! **Janette Carrillo Llamas, 8th grade**

In Ms. Hunnicutt's civics class, we learned about laws and how they work in the United States today. **TayShawn Hairston, 8th grade**

Many students from 8th grade have done well on their benchmark tests. Teachers are proud of their students for behaving and doing their best. **Jaymi Hernandez, 8th grade**

On Monday, we had a meeting for homeroom reporters. In the gym, we had measurements done. In science, we are learning about energy transfer. In history, we are learning about the amendment process. On Wednesday—we did pull-ups in gym, reviewed Algebra 2, practiced for the band march, and studied for civics. On Thursday, we had a very fun assembly. We started a new unit on liquids, solids, and gases. I got a 100% on my Algebra 2 assessment. **Taimir Manns, 8th Grade**

This week included a lot of hard and challenging things, but overall, it was good! In English, we had two benchmark tests—ah, so happy they're over! In civics, we worked on due process. We also had a few fun volleyball games, and today is picture day! **Selena Stultz, 8th Grade**

This week, Mr. Byrd's class learned about the genre of horror and different topics. Good job to the MMS football team—a loss does not mean you're a loser! **Ma'Kiya Walton, 8th grade**

On Monday, JV volleyball played William Fleming, and middle school volleyball played Tunstall. On Tuesday, there was a golf match and a JV volleyball game against Radford, along with a middle school volleyball game against Moneta. On Wednesday, there was a golf match

LEGAL

COUNTY OF HENRY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a public hearing has been scheduled for **October 29, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd., Collinsville, Virginia. The purpose of this public hearing is to receive citizen input into the possible issuance of a Special Use Permit for the following case.

Case S-25-16 Robert Amos

A request for a Special Use Permit was received under Section 21-602 of the Henry County Zoning Ordinance to convert the lower level of the building into a residence, therefore making it a duplex apartment building. The property is located at 17529 A.L. Philpott Hwy, and is proposed to be rezoned by the Board of Supervisors to Suburban Residential District S-R on October 28, 2025. The Tax Map number is 50.7/70A.

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

Lee H. Clark, AICP

Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

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 **October 28, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd., Collinsville, Virginia.

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

Case R-25-14 Robert Amos

The property is located at 16783 and 16805 A.L. Philpott, in the Horsepasture District. The property is shown on Tax Map 50.8/176. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 1-acre from Commercial District B-1 and Agricultural A-1 to Suburban Residential District S-R. The applicant wishes to subdivide the property and create two, single family residences.

Case R-25-15 Robert Amos

The property is located at 17529 A.L. Philpott, in the Horsepasture District. The property is shown on Tax Map 50.7/70A. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 2-acres from Commercial District B-1 to Suburban Residential District S-R. The applicant wishes to rezone the property and apply for the required Special Use Permit, to convert the lower level of the building into a residence, therefore making it a duplex apartment building.

Case R-25-16 Percy H. Gibson, Jr.

The property is located at 60 Broken Oak Dr, in the Iriswood District. The property is shown on Tax Map 45.7/(11)/6,6A,7. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 3 lots from Suburban Residential District S-R to Rural Residential District R-R. The applicant wishes to replace a manufactured home on the property that was destroyed by fire in 2020.

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

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF MARTINSVILLE

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Virginia Code Section 15.2-2204 that the City Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia, will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 28, 2025 at 7:00 PM in the City Council Chambers in the Municipal Building, 55 W. Church Street, Martinsville, Virginia, to consider the following proposed amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance to remove height restrictions from the zoning ordinance. As a result of the proposed amendments, height requirements of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code would continue to apply.

The proposed amendments would apply to the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance.

- Section I. Administration and Enforcement;
- Section III. General Provisions;
- Section IV. Site Plan Regulations;
- Section V. Nonconformity ;
- Section IX. R-E Estate Residential District;
- Section X. R-N Neighborhood Residential District;
- Section XI. R-C City Residential District;
- Section XII. R-T Residential Transitional District;
- Section XIII. C-N Neighborhood Commercial District;
- Section XIV. C-UB Uptown Business District;
- Section XV. C-C Corridor Commercial District;
- Section XVI. ED-MA Economic Development District - Medical and Academic;
- Section XVII. ED-G Economic Development District - General;
- Section XV III. ED-I Economic Development District - Intensive;
- Section XIX. TND - 0 Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District;
- Section XX. EC-O Entrance Corridor Overlay District;
- Section XXIII. Off Street Parking and Loading.

Full documents of the proposed Zoning Text Amendment are available for inspection at the City Offices, 55 W. Church Street, Martinsville, Virginia during regular business hours.

Any person desiring to express his or her views with respect to the proposed text amendment is welcomed appear at the aforesaid time and place.

against Benjamin Franklin. Thursday, JV volleyball played Glenvar, and middle school volleyball played Halifax. We also had a JV football game against James River.

I want to say thank you to our speaker, Coach Kirby, for encouraging the students to do the right thing. Let's go Bulldogs! **Maya Williams, 8th Grade**

On Monday, we got our music stands and learned from our Essential Elements books. In science, we did a simulation on moon phases. In band, we played new notes, and in math, we worked on number lines with positive and negative numbers. We also wore purple for Mental Health Awareness. On Wednesday, if 6th graders did most of their homework, they got to have lunch with the other hall in the library—thank you to all who did! In PE, we ran a mile. Thursday was Walk to School Day and AVID Day, where everyone wore college gear. The whole school had a guest speaker—a UFC fighter and Olympic gold medalist. He played games with us, and it was really fun! **Adelaide Brent, 6th grade**

Another week at MMS was really good! Students worked on projects, and Ms. Scales passed out everyone's October calendar and reading log. For lunch, we had pizza. On Tuesday, we had original or spicy chicken sandwiches. On Wednesday, things got exciting when we read Mrs. Frisby in Mrs. Scales' room. We also wore purple for suicide prevention—thank you to everyone who participated! On Thursday, everyone walked to school. We also had an assembly for a very special guest who talked to us about life. Everyone loved it! It was College Gear Day, too. This was a really good week! **Miriam Carter, 6th grade**

In English, we've been reading our HMH books and practicing figurative language. In science, we took our SGA (Student Growth Assessment), which shows our teachers how much we know and what we might need help with. Our sports teams have had some trouble winning lately, but I'd like to remind everyone—it's okay to lose because that's how we learn to win! **Semaiya Craighead, 6th grade**

On Monday, we started learning about positive and negative numbers. This week, 6th grade has been finding ducks like crazy—and teachers have been finding them too! History has been great and fun. We want to give a shout-out to our teachers for all their support. Thursday, we had a speaker, and 6th grade also had a field trip to Fayette Area Historical Initiative Museum. We got to talk to retired football player Carl Hairston on the phone! **Nevaeh Daniels, 6th grade**

We're working hard in math on integers. For lunch, we had pizza and turkey-and-cheese croissants. We had a volleyball game today and

middle school auditions for the Martinsville City Performing Arts program. In band, we're learning the proper way to blow into our instruments. In science, we have "ducks"—the more notes you earn, the more ducks you get! Whoever earns the most ducks wins a prize. In art, we're working on ink techniques—the four main ways to do ink art. The Bulldog Bounce Bash is coming up October 10 in the gym, and Second Chance Cheer Tryouts is also right around the corner for grades 6–8! **Mercy Moore, 6th grade**

This week we had lots of fun in 6th grade and in Ms. Clemons' math class. We've been busy playing math card games that are so fun it doesn't even feel like math! In English class, we've been reading Freak the Mighty—I highly recommend it! In history, we went on a field trip to the FAHI Museum and got to call retired football player Ed Reynolds. It was very cool! The golf team did well in their match at Forest Park Country Club. Thanks, MMS, for another great week! **Emery Taylor, 6th grade**

On Monday in English, we made calendars to keep up with assignments. We're still reading Freak the Mighty. On Tuesday, we read a paragraph about a person named Mrs. Frisby. At lunch, we had chicken tenders. In history, we had a guest speaker and wore purple for suicide prevention—thank you to everyone who participated! In history, we had a field trip and got to call Lou Whitaker, the retired Detroit Tigers baseball player and Jesse Penn, retired football player. Thank you to FAHI museum for letting us come! **Calleigh Whittle, 6th grade**

Today we had a game—we tried our best but lost to Halifax. This boy asked me for my number, which was funny! Tomorrow we're having an ice cream social for kids who don't have any missing work or infractions. We also got awesome press badges from Mrs. Woody and Ms. Callie Hietala—they're really cool! I can't wait for the ice cream social! **Trinity Hairston, 7th grade**

This week was very fun! We went on a field trip to learn about multiple careers. It was a great place with really friendly people—you may even find a career that interests you. They treated visitors like family. **Shaurya Mahajan, 7th grade**

This week was productive for the Bulldogs! On Monday, science 7 introduced genetics, and English 7 had an assessment. On Tuesday, science 7 dove into dominant, recessive, homozygous, and heterozygous genotypes. On Wednesday, 7th grade went on a field trip for a career search. New ideas for a donation drive for Grace Network were introduced by Ms. Hoffman. Thursday was Walk to School Day and College Attire Day. Afterwards, we had an assembly with a guest speaker named Coach Kirby. **Katie Wall, 7th grade**

YMCA kicks off capital campaign

The Martinsville-Henry County YMCA hosted a special event recently at Hamlet Vineyards to officially launch the Transforming Community Capital Campaign, an initiative to build the new Lester Family YMCA. The celebration, sponsored by The Lester Group, brought together donors and friends of the Y to honor those who have already supported the project and to invite the broader community to join in this historic effort.

The new 60,000 square-foot YMCA will be constructed on a 7-acre site near the intersection of Memorial Boulevard and Fayette Street. Once complete, the facility will serve as a hub for wellness, youth development, and community connection. Strategically located near Albert Harris Elementary School, the Fayette Historic District, Uptown Martinsville, and the new Five Points Neighborhood, the Y will be positioned to strengthen access and opportunity for all.

Plans for the new YMCA include a state-of-the-art wellness center, three full-court gymnasiums, an indoor aquatic center, an elevated indoor walking track, and multiple group exercise and community rooms. An Early Learning Center and a variety of outdoor amenities are also part of the plans.

"We are so thankful for all the generous support we have received to date," said Brad Kinkema, CEO of the Martinsville-Henry

County YMCA. "Because of the leadership support of many at the event, we are thrilled to announce that we have raised over \$6.7 million toward the construction of this transformational community project." He added, "Tonight, we celebrate this momentum and extend an invitation to everyone in our community to join us in shaping the future of Martinsville-Henry County."

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$28 million. In addition to the Harvest Foundation's previously announced \$12 million investment and the Transforming Community Capital Campaign, the YMCA is also pursuing various funding grants from public sector sources.

"This is such an exciting time for Martinsville and Henry County as our YMCA embarks on this transformational project for our community," stated Natalie Hodge Davis, community advocate. "The vision for the new Lester Family YMCA will significantly increase the number of children, families, adults, and seniors who will have access to expanded YMCA facilities and programs."

To learn more about the plans for the new YMCA or to make a gift to the Transforming Community Capital Campaign, visit martinsvilleymca.com/capitalcampaign or contact Brad Kinkema at (276) 632-6427 or brad@martinsvilleymca.com.

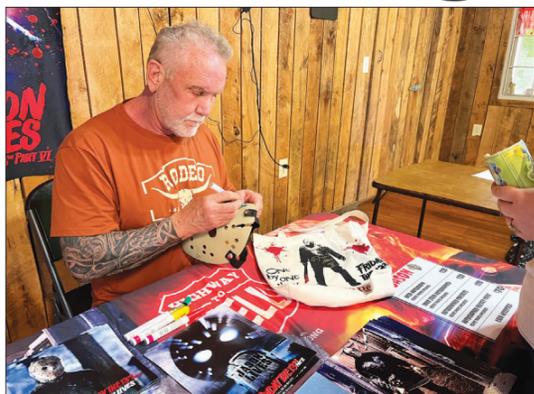
Sports Schedule

The following are the dates and times of local high school teams and their games for the week of October 13-18:

10/13	7pm	Volleyball	Staunton River at Bassett
10/14	6pm	Volleyball	Carlisle at Timberlake Christian
	7pm	Volleyball	Bassett at George Washington
	7pm	Volleyball	Magna Vista at Mecklenburg County
	7pm	Volleyball	Martinsville at Patrick County
10/16	5pm	Cross Country	Bassett - meet at Anglers Park, Danville
	5pm	Cross Country	Magna Vista - meet at Anglers Park, Danville
	5pm	Boys Soccer	WCA at Carlisle
	7pm	Volleyball	Bassett at Tunstall
	7pm	Volleyball	Halifax County at Magna Vista
	7pm	Volleyball	Carlisle at Roanoke Catholic
10/17	4:30pm	Boys Soccer	Carlisle at Fishburne Military
	7pm	Football	Magna Vista at Bassett
	7pm	Football	Martinsville at Tunstall

Thank you for reading Henry County Enterprise

‘Jason Lives Fan Day’ blends horror, nostalgia, and community fun



By Jessica Dillon

Jason Lives Fan Day brought the eerie atmosphere of Crystal Lake to Henry County's Camp Lee Ford on Sept. 27.

The event featured actor C.J. Graham — best known for portraying Jason Voorhees in “Friday the 13th Part VI: Jason Lives” — who met fans, signed autographs, and posed for VIP photos in full costume. The day concluded with an evening screening of the 1986 film, where a small group of fans watched alongside Graham himself.

“It seemed like everybody had a blast. C.J. had a blast. All the fans enjoyed what we had to offer them at the camp,” said event organizer Corey Agee. He estimated that several hundred attendees came throughout the day, including many who traveled from North Carolina.

“From the time it started to the end, people were just rolling in and out all day,” Agee said, noting that the event was promoted through both local and North Carolina radio stations.

Camp Lee Ford was transformed to resemble the infamous Camp Crystal Lake, complete with props,

police tape, and even a Henry County Sheriff's Office car used to recreate a film scene. Another display behind a cabin depicted the demise of Sheriff Garris, a memorable moment from the movie.

VIP guests had the opportunity to take photos with Graham on the camp's dock, enjoy a private dinner, and participate in a Q&A session before the movie screening. Afterward, Graham shared behind-the-scenes stories and memories about his co-stars.

“He interacts with the fans and wants to give them that full-blown experience, especially when he's in costume,” Agee said. “He wants you to feel like you're actually there with him.”

Fans described Graham as “charismatic,” “down to earth,” and “very personal,” praising his easygoing style and humor throughout the event.

The festival atmosphere also included several horror-themed vendors, such as Joyful Canvas Creations, Spiral Treats, Project Spirit Seeker, and Tammy's Grill, which provided food throughout the day.

Agee said he was thrilled with how smoothly the



event went and is already planning ahead. “I would definitely like to do something with him again next year,” he said. “It's the 40th anniversary of his movie next year, so it would be pretty cool to bring him back along with some other actors from the film.”

The event was hosted by The Maskoween Project, which provides Halloween costumes to children in need each October.

NCI's STAGS Robotics Team Goes Undefeated, Wins Red Banner at Blue Ridge Brawl



New College Institute's (NCI) FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) team—STAGS Team 1262—proudly brought home the first-place Red Banner after an outstanding performance at the Blue Ridge Brawl, where they went undefeated throughout the regular competition and playoffs.

During the alliance selection process, STAGS had the opportunity to team up with Team 977: Cometbots and Team 401: Copperhead Robotics (C-Team). Together, the alliance demonstrated exceptional teamwork, strategy, and technical skill—earning a perfect record and securing the championship title.

“We're so proud of our students and grateful for our alliance partners who helped make this victory possible,” said Trevor Martin, NCI Workforce Training Instructor and STAGS Head Mentor. “The teamwork and sportsmanship

at Blue Ridge Brawl were outstanding.”

Blue Ridge Brawl is an off-season FRC event held each fall. This year, the Blue Ridge Brawl game was the 2025 FIRST Robotics Competition Game Reefescape. The STAGS continue to build momentum and look forward to their next off-season competition as they strive for excellence in robotics, innovation, and teamwork and prepare for the 2026 season. The FRC regular season will begin on January 10, 2026, when FIRST Chesapeake announces the new game and rules.

For more information on STAGS Team 1262, please visit <https://newcollegeinstitute.org/k-12-programs/robotics/> or reach out to Trevor Martin by phone at 276-403-5620 or by email at tmartin@newcollegeinstitute.org. We are now recruiting students and mentors for the 2026 season. Thanks to



grants and sponsorships, participation on the team is free.

Ferrell

(cont. from page 1)

citing an investigative report from Sands Anderson. Council members did not publicly release that report, claiming attorney-client privilege, and later referred the matter to Bedford County Commonwealth's Attorney Wes Nance as a special prosecutor.

In the letter to Fincher, Askew wrote that Ferrell-Benavides' employment contract “specifically promised she would not be terminated for any reason unless the city used a ‘just means’ in making this decision.” The letter says the city instead relied on still-secretive “evidence” from what it calls an alleged impartial investigation.

The letter also questioned the city's handling of the Sands Anderson report, citing a recent news story in which Nance said Martinsville had turned over the results of its internal probe. “Logic suggests this means he has finally received the full unredacted report,” the letter states. “This suggests the city has now waived any claim of attorney-client privilege or determined its prior claim was not justified.”

Askew requested a copy of the report “as a matter of simple fairness.” If the city does not release it voluntarily, the letter serves as a formal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

The letter to Siegel asserts that, “based on news stories and the comments of members of the Martinsville City Council, she was terminated for cause due to the results of your ‘investigation,’ which produced a report claiming to expose ‘evidence’ of her alleged ‘criminal’ behavior.”

Askew also instructed Siegel to preserve all documents related to Ferrell-Benavides' termination, her Equal Employment Opportunity (EEOC) complaint, and the Sands Anderson investigation.

The letter to Jones serves as notice of a potential filing and outlines claims of wrongful actions by elected and appointed officials. It alleges that Ferrell-Benavides questioned legal bills from Sands Anderson, declined to approve certain development projects, and refused “to participate in the customary practice of patronage hiring on be-

half of politically connected persons or entities.”

“Additionally, my client spoke openly and honestly with many people about the toxic culture at City Hall,” the letter states, adding that the city failed to correct those issues and retaliated against her after she filed an EEOC complaint.

The notice lists multiple incidents between July 14 and Sept. 8, including harassment at New College Institute on July 14. It cites eight claims of defamation, four of retaliation, and one each of tortious interference and a civil rights violation.

Ridgeway

(cont. from page 1)

Jaws of Life, costs roughly \$14,000-\$15,000. “Needless to say, we're very appreciative of the grant,” Adams said. The program “allocates funds based on population, and we're very fortunate that Henry County and the Town of Ridgeway are participants in that program.”

“We're a teetotal volunteer organization. We have to do everything we can to fundraise to keep the money flowing,” Decker said.

O'Der said he plans to meet with Del. Eric Phillips, R-Martinsville, about possibly increasing state funding for local fire departments in the next General Assembly session.

Adams also said the department recently mailed donation letters to the community. Those wishing to

contribute can mail donations to P.O. Box 4, Ridgeway, VA 24148.

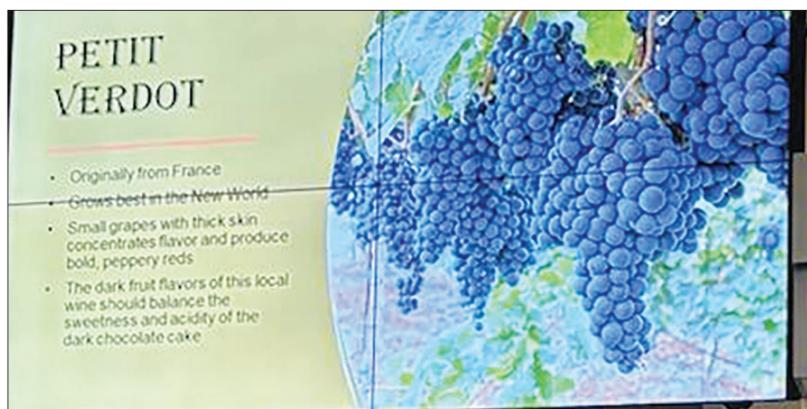
Like other volunteer organizations, the fire department is constantly looking for new members.

“The cost of equipment and members is an equally important aspect,” Adams said, “Membership for most departments in Henry County are down...there's not a lot of people looking to do this for nothing.”

Those interested in volunteering with the Ridgeway Fire Department should get an application from the Henry County Public Safety website or come to its monthly meeting on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

For more information, go to [Facebook.com/RidgewayDistrictVolunteerFireDepartment](https://www.facebook.com/RidgewayDistrictVolunteerFireDepartment).

Museum explores chocolate history, readies Boney and Booz celebration



Dr. Jackson Means and Robbie Hendrix of VMNH explain the wines and chocolates featured during the event. (Contributed photos)



Dr. Jackson Means addresses guests during the chocolate tasting.



Chef Janey Ashby discusses creative ways chocolate can enhance a meal.



A chocolate- and coffee-crusted lamb lollipop served at the event.



Black Forest gateau served during the dinner.

By Jessica Dillon
 The Virginia Museum of Natural History hosted a “Natural History of Chocolate” program on Oct. 4, a paid event that combined a multi-course meal with insights into the science and culture of chocolate.
 About 40 guests attended the dinner, prepared by King’s Grant managing chef Janey Ashby. Museum director Joe Keiper described the five-course menu, which included Mexican chocolate soup, cheese and fruit with chocolate dip, salad with chocolate dressing, a choice of lamb or chicken lollipops crusted with coffee and cocoa, and a black forest gateau.
 “I’ve never in my life ever thought that cheese and chocolate would go well together, but boy, it really did,” Keiper said. He noted that an im-

ported cheese from Great Britain paired especially well with the chocolate. Guests also enjoyed hand-selected wine pairings.
 Dr. Jackson Means, who previously worked at a winery, guided participants through chocolate tastings, explaining proper techniques for smelling, listening to the crispness, and tasting chocolate to fully appreciate its subtleties.
 “The process of making chocolate from cocoa beans is much more involved than I ever knew, so from a cultural standpoint, that was pretty cool,” Keiper said.
 Attendees expressed interest in similar events in the future, possibly exploring the natural history of other foods, such as wine or cherries, combined with multi-course meals and science education.

The museum is now preparing for its next Boney and Booz — along with its ongoing special exhibit, “The Age of Dinosaurs,” on Oct. 25. New exhibits, including Joro spider specimens, aim to combine wonder with a touch of creepiness.
 Zach Rider, helping organize the event, said, “We just want everybody to know that we’re looking forward to an extremely fun, festive environment. We definitely encourage folks to dress up in costume.”
 The event will feature scavenger hunts inside the museum, balloon art, face painting, fire dancers, stilt walkers, food trucks, and a beer garden for adults. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$10 for children ages 6–17, and free for EBT cardholders.

Barefoot Puppet Theatre takes students on an Antarctic journey at an in-school performance

Barefoot Puppet Theatre brought the play “New Squid on the Block” to local elementary schools on Oct. 6-7 as part of Piedmont Arts’ educational outreach program.
 About 1,200 students at Albert Harris, Axton, Carver and Patrick Henry elementary schools experienced the interactive performance that shared the story of a curious Antarctic squid who seeks connection and friendship in unlikely places.
 In the wordless performance conveyed through pantomime and movement, handcrafted puppets in the shapes of sea animals traversed an icy landscape accompanied by an original musical score by Ned Haskins. The heartwarming tale illustrated the value of friendship and conflict resolution while celebrating our ability to create connections despite our differences.
 Barefoot Puppet Theatre is a



Richmond-based group founded in 1997 by Heidi Rugg. They have performed award-winning programs in theatres, schools, libraries and museums across the country. The group’s current work focuses on environmental themes and eco-friendly arts practices. They hand-build their puppets using cardboard, wool, handmade paper and a variety of recycled materials. Learn more about their programs at barefootpuppets.com.
 Piedmont Arts’ educational outreach programs are presented free of charge to students and schools. The museum reaches nearly 7,000 students each year with its programming. To donate to the museum’s Kay Smith Arts Education Fund in support of this program, visit PiedmontArts.org/secure/donate.cfm.
 For more information on educational outreach, exhibits and events, visit PiedmontArts.org.

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



Two-vehicle crash results in fatality

The Virginia State Police are investigating a two-vehicle crash, which resulted in a fatality. The crash occurred Monday, Oct. 6, at 7:50 p.m. on Stultz Road, one tenth of a mile east of Virginia Avenue in Henry County.
 A 2020 Honda Civic was traveling west in the eastbound lanes of Stultz Road and allegedly struck a 2009

Chevrolet Tahoe head-on, according to a release.
 The driver of the Honda was identified as Gloria Jaan Narsis Bednorski, 36, of Martinsville.
 Bednorski was not wearing her seatbelt and died at the scene.
 The crash remains under investigation.

Fieldale Precinct 201 move was effective July 1

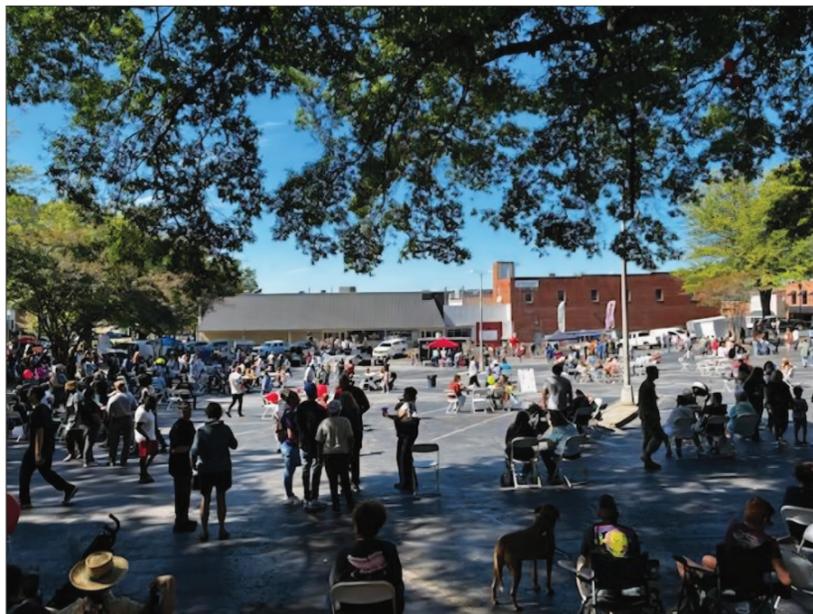
The Henry County Electoral Board and Office of Elections & Voter Registration announced the move of the Fieldale Precinct #201 from Victory Baptist Church (1300 Dillons’ Fork Road Fieldale, Virginia) to the Fieldale Apartments’ Auditorium located at 100 Marshall Way Fieldale, Virginia. This move was effective July 1, 2025.
 All voters who will be affected by this change should have received individual voter cards in the mail with their new voting location information.

Thank you for reading
Henry County Enterprise

Oktoberfest brings crowds, community spirit to Uptown



Crowds filled Uptown streets during the 44th annual Oktoberfest on Oct. 4.



Bands performed in front of Walsh's Chicken throughout the day.



Martinsville Police Department set up a tent to interact with the public during the event.



Patrick Flinn, who is among the candidates for the Martinsville Commonwealth's Attorney, greeted voters at his booth during Oktoberfest.

By Jessica Dillon

The 44th annual Oktoberfest filled Uptown Martinsville with food, fun, and fellowship on Oct. 4.

More than 250 vendors lined the streets, offering everything from local food trucks like Factory Roast to political booths seeking to connect with voters ahead of this year's election. The festival also featured a beer garden, children's area, and free live entertainment.

The Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce organized the event, which drew thousands of attendees. Among the most popular fundraisers was the sale of Oktoberfest

straw brooms by the Lions Club, with proceeds supporting special needs students. The club is opening a handicap-accessible playground at Meadow View Elementary School on Oct. 13.

Martinsville's Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson attended to visit vendors and local businesses. "The people who are here and sharing this community with everyone is what's important," she said, adding that the food smelled wonderful throughout the event.

Dogs were also well represented among attendees. Several pet-related businesses, including Barking Beauty's, participated to promote their services. Chris Lawless, who is opposing

Joe Brynat in the race for the Collinsville District seat on the Henry County Board of Supervisors, brought his dog along while mingling with festivalgoers and meeting local candidates.

The United Way hosted children's crafts in front of its building, including wreath, pumpkin, and leaf decorating, as well as bookmark-making, said Sharon Cobbler, child care business development specialist. De Capo, another child-focused nonprofit, set up a chalk drawing area for children.

Oktoberfest will return for its 45th year in 2026, with details to be announced closer to the event.

Norris

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

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www.norrismemorialservices.com

Former

(cont. from page 1)

business.

On Oct. 29, 2024, Fincher again wrote to the ABC about the restaurant, the suit states, and "made several nefarious and defamatory statements" about Kornna and Johnson. The letter allegedly described Kornna as

"a public nuisance to the surrounding businesses" and said the establishment "continues to create issues that result in a danger to the general safety of the community." Fincher also reportedly wrote that "the strain on Martinsville Police Department resources caused by Uptown Kornna Kitchen in recent months is significant."

The filing states that on Oct. 29, 2024, the ABC revoked Kornna's liquor license at Fincher's request, which "served as a death knell to Kornna and its existence."

Rawls is accused of slandering Johnson on Dec. 17, 2024, when he allegedly said, "If you do not know about Rico Johnson ... this is a person who has spent a lifetime hurting people — stealing from people." The suit alleges Rawls went on to say Johnson had taken advantage of "many others" in "many other communities," adding that "everyone up here knows it." Rawls allegedly said, "Here we are pretending that Mr. Johnson is a decent person giving back to the community."

"These statements were false and known to be false to" Rawls when they were made, the filing states.

Johnson is seeking \$1.5 million in compensatory damages and \$500,000 in punitive damages against both defendants personally, along with pre- and post-judgment interest, court costs, and any other relief deemed appropriate by the court.

Rawls, a Martinsville City Council member, said he welcomes the opportunity to address the claims in court.

"I am eager and excited to get this process started," Rawls said. "Any opportunity to put Rico Johnson in the spotlight and attach some headlines to his behavior is a win for this community and a valuable warning for the communities he scuttles off to next. I am deeply amused by the irony of his claims considering the many charges for which he was recently indicted, including larceny and threatening the lives of Martinsville citizens on video. However, I also understand that is just another day in the life of a man with an astonishing multi-decade legal record that includes felony convictions and prison time for defrauding down-and-out citizens by posing as a bail bondsman."

Johnson has requested a jury trial.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY

FREE TO ALL CITY OF MARTINSVILLE AND HENRY COUNTY RESIDENTS
(Not available to Commercial Businesses)

ITEMS TO BRING

Solvents (mineral spirits, paint thinner, turpentine, acetone, etc.)
Paints (oil base, polyurethane, tung oil, deck or oil base stains, etc.)
Fuels (gasoline, #2 fuel, kerosene, diesel fuel, small engine fuel, etc.)
Automobile Fluids (motor oil, transmission fluids, antifreeze, etc.)
Lead acid batteries, computer equipment, cell phones, ink cartridges, paper (8.5 x 11, 4 boxes max)

ITEMS NOT TO BRING

Smoke detectors, compressed gas cylinders, explosives, radioactive materials, household cleaners, pesticides, herbicides, drain cleaners, tires, light bulbs, TVs

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

9 am - 12 Noon (Will be held rain or shine)

LOCATION: BASSETT SERVICE CENTER

2285 Fairstone Park Highway
Bassett, Virginia 24055

DHALL@THEENTERPRISE.NET