

## 'Be the change': Norman trains next generation of holiday volunteers

By Jessica Dillon

Scott Norman is a well-known community leader and cook involved with the Harvest Youth Board, the W. Dan Prince III Thanksgiving Dinner and Richard's Christmas Dinner, all of which take place annually. Norman encourages volunteer participation and says he is grateful to help people feel less alone during the holidays.

"Thirty-some years ago, one of my friends called and he was in a panic. He was cooking a Thanksgiving meal," Norman said. He already had some connection to the meal through his church.

He said one thing led to another, and before long he fell in love with helping. "After many years of helping, one day on Christmas, after we delivered the food to the food site and started passing out the meals, he took the apron off and hung it around my neck and said, 'It's yours now. I've taught you all I can teach you and carry it on until you train somebody to take over.'"

"The very, very first year, the two gentlemen served about 50 people," he said. "The next year, when I became involved, we were really excited because we served 82 or 83 people. Now at Christmas time we serve approximately 2,500 people."

Years later, Norman said he was approached by youth about doing a Thanksgiving meal in Dan Prince's honor. "We taught them how to do this meal. We taught them everything that we



Scott Norman is pictured with his father, Dillard Norman, who has served as his dispatcher. He's been with Scott since the first dinner was served. (Contributed)

could. There's a certain amount of things they cannot do because they're not 18 years old. I, along with some other older people, handle that part for them, and they serve the masses.

"The young people who are carrying the torch forward with Dan Prince and the Thanksgiving dinner are preparing to serve 5,000 people this

(See Be the Change p. 10)



Accepting the student innovator award were Mr. Trevor Martin and the STAGS Robotics Team.

## NCI's STAGs among awardees at Stars Banquet

The Southern Piedmont Technology Council held its annual Innovation Stars Banquet on November 20, and presented the Student Innovator Award to the New College Institute's (NCI's) STAGS Robotics Team students.

The award is designed to recognize a high school or full-time college student that has shown leadership in technology.

NCI FIRST Robotics Team 1262 has completed.

(See NCI p. 3)

## Norman takes leading role in Greensboro's 'Wizard of Oz'

By Jessica Dillon

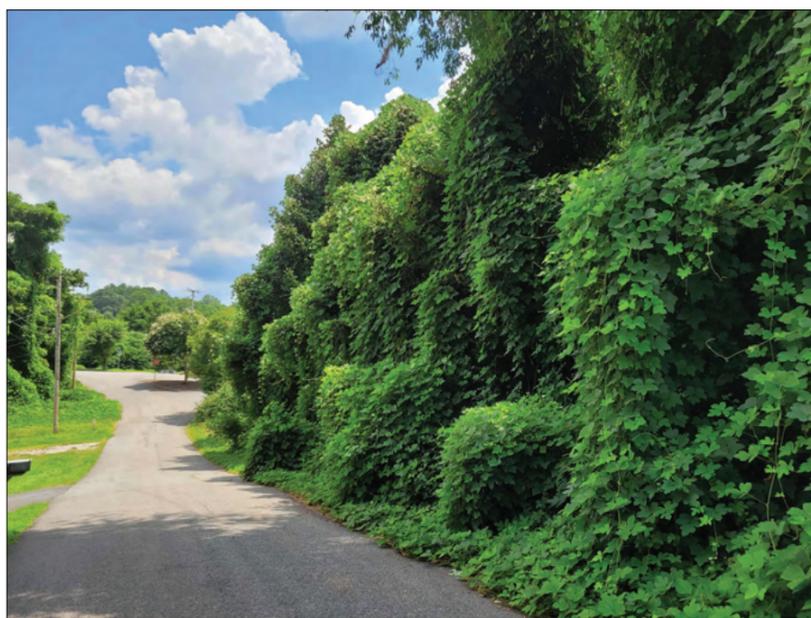
Scarlett Norman, 19, landed a leading role as Dorothy in the Community Theatre of Greensboro's 30th annual "Wizard of Oz" production. Norman represented the Martinsville-Henry County area in the show and has been attending classes in North Carolina, where she is triple-majoring in marketing, communications and drama.

"I think they say approximately 10,000 people see it each year," Norman said of the play. The show has run for 30 years and puts actors through weeks of rehearsals. "We've been practicing since the end of September, so it's been about six to eight weeks of rehearsal."

Norman has been in plays since she was six months old. "I played Baby Simba in 'The Lion King' when they do the Circle of Life. Ever since then I've been acting, but technically my first production was when I was four years old and

(See Norman p. 10)

## Kudzu concerns grow as new removal business takes root



Kudzu invades Gay Smither's property in Martinsville.

By Jessica Dillon

Kudzu has become a more prevalent issue in in Henry County and Martinsville, even being discussed at a city council meeting a few months ago. The plant grows rapidly and can only be killed by digging up the root. Cutting it back is only a temporary fix in most cases, which inspired a recent business idea from Deb Desiderato's son, Alex.

Alex recently moved from New York, where he studied for a busi-

ness degree for four years.

"He has finally figured out that (kudzu) is what he wants to tackle. But he's also interested in the other invasives as well, namely the tree of heaven, which is the preferred host to the spotted lanternfly," Desiderato said.

She said she did not expect how big a kudzu problem existed locally, especially within the city.

"It's just so sad to see it, you know, climbing everywhere. And not a

whole lot is being done about it from what we can tell."

The team has already visited several locations to pull up crown roots. They are looking into crowd-funding to purchase better tools, including a flail mower, a type of mower attachment that uses free-swinging blades (flails) attached to a rotating drum. Unlike a rotary mower that spins large rotary mower blades in a horizontal plane, a flail mower's blades spin vertical-

ly around the drum, striking grass, weeds, and vegetation in a chopping motion, according to online information.

"It's going to take some heavy-duty equipment to tackle kudzu. Obviously, it just comes back every year, and we want to prevent its regrowth," Desiderato said.

One of their notable root hunts took place at Nelson Auto Salvage, a site with a large amount of kudzu.

"We actually got a good-sized crown root from across the street in the customer parking lot. And that was Alex's first crown root, so he was excited to get it," she said.

Desiderato said it can be nearly impossible to find crown roots when the leaves are thick. In the fall, the plant becomes more brittle, making roots easier to locate. They also looked into using goats, which are known for helping control kudzu, but the year-round upkeep would be difficult.

Now, "we're about to go through our first fall of kudzu, so we

want to see how dry it gets," she said. "Once the foliage is removed, then how much easier it's going to be to find the crown roots."

The team is also interested in addressing the tree of heaven, a plant that multiplies when cut and can damage crops.

Martinsville resident Gay Smither voiced frustration with kudzu on her property and said she wants the city to adopt an ordinance.

"I'm 78 years old and stuck with a huge kudzu problem. I am about to pay \$2,500 to get it cleaned up. I want to get the city to make an ordinance that people with kudzu on their property have to clean it up or be fined," she said.

Smither added that many municipalities have enacted laws to help with kudzu control.

"I'm paying to have it dug up on my neighbor's property. They let it go, and now I pay. The house is a rental," she said, and added that she struggled to find a removal service and is now paying several thou-

sand dollars to have one from Christiansburg address the problem.

While there are services for cutting the vine, it only makes the problem "worse," she said, and Smither needs the root dug up to stop it completely. Smither said she plans to speak with the city council in December.

Desiderato said several residents have expressed similar concerns, and that some have volunteered to help with root crown removal.

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 FOR MORE UPDATES



# Aspen Institute ranks P&HCC in top 200 nationally

The Aspen Institute named Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) as one of the 200 institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's premier recognition of high achievement and performance among two-year colleges. Started in 2010, this is the ninth cycle of the Aspen Prize.

"I am thrilled that P&HCC has been selected as one of the 200 institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence," said P&HCC President Dr. Greg Hodges, adding, "This is a tremendous honor for P&HCC and speaks to the incredible work our employees undertake every day to ensure we are providing outstanding education and training so that our students have clear pathways to economic and social mobility."

The 200 colleges were selected based on their student outcomes data, including retention, completion, and transfer rates. Together, they represent the breadth and diversity of the community college sector. They are located in urban, rural, and suburban areas across the country and serve anywhere from a few hundred students to tens of thousands. Some of these colleges focus primarily on workforce programs, while others focus on transfer and bachelor's attainment or a combination of the two.

"The Aspen Prize rewards colleges that achieve the kind of outcomes that actually matter to students—completing college degree programs that, in turn, lead to lifelong success," said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. "At a time when many Americans are struggling to pay their bills, Aspen Prize winners offer a powerful message: Community colleges can deliver the kind of life-changing education that makes the Ameri-

can Dream real."

As a next step, the 200 eligible colleges have been invited to participate in a rigorous review process that will culminate in the naming of the Aspen Prize winner in spring 2027. Over the coming 20 months, the colleges that apply for the Aspen Prize will be rigorously assessed based on (1) student outcomes data, ranging from student retention and completion rates to employment and wages after graduation, and (2) whether they have engaged in scaled practices that led to high and improving student outcomes.

Community colleges play a vital role in higher education across the country, educating about 40 percent of all undergraduates. Yet, national student outcomes fall short in both the rate at which students graduate and the percentage of students that achieve success after graduation. Aspen defines success as the ability to secure a good-paying job either after earning a community college credential or after successfully transferring and earning a bachelor's degree.

The Aspen Prize celebrates those community colleges with high and improving rates of student success. Aspen uses multiple data sources to identify colleges that are excelling, recognizing achievement in six key areas: teaching and learning, certificate and degree completion, transfer and bachelor's attainment, employment and wages after graduation, and levels of college access. Aspen then researches the practices of these top colleges in order to share successful strategies with the field.

"Among these 200 colleges are some really special places that deliver strong and improving outcomes for students across the board," Wyner said. "Our job over the coming 20 months is to work with a deep bench of field experts to assess which of these 200 stand

out so we can not only honor them with a monetary award but drive attention to the most effective field practices that other colleges can replicate."

Eligibility for the Aspen Prize is based on publicly available data. Colleges must show strong and improving student outcomes in first-to-second year retention, credentials awarded, and completion and transfer rates. To identify the 200, Aspen updated its data model—including new measures for part-time degree completion, transfer rates, and bachelor's attainment—by adding data from the National Student Clearinghouse to federal data sets already being used.

Nationwide, about 20 percent of community colleges have been invited to apply (200 of just under 1,000 public two-year colleges assessed for Aspen Prize eligibility). This represents an increase from the 150 institutions eligible to apply for the Aspen Prize in prior cycles. The full list can be accessed on the Aspen Prize homepage.

The next steps in the process in-

clude:

- November 13/December 9, 2025: Application deadlines for the 2027 Aspen Prize
  - April 2026: Announcement of 25 semifinalists, selected based on assessments of extensive data and the application, by a group of 11 experts in community colleges, higher education, and workforce
  - June 2026: Announcement of 10 finalists, selected by the same group of experts
  - Fall 2026: Collection of additional data from the 10 finalists, including employment and earnings data for graduates from 2020 and 2025, as well as qualitative assessments of practices by field experts during multi-day site visits to each of the 10 finalists
  - February 2027: The Aspen Prize winner selected by a distinguished, independent jury
  - Spring 2027: Announcement of the Aspen Prize winner and celebration of the 10 finalists at an event in Washington, D.C.
- To read more about the selection process, visit [as.pn/prize](https://as.pn/prize).

## GENEDGE establishes headquarters at New College Institute

GENEDGE, Virginia's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), has officially relocated its headquarters to the Baldwin Building at the New College Institute (NCI) campus in Martinsville, marking a major milestone in the Commonwealth's continued investment in advanced manufacturing, innovation, and workforce development.

GENEDGE's relocation underscores Southern Virginia's growing role as a center for innovation and applied learning. GENEDGE leverages federal and state funding to provide a wealth of expertise and resources to Virginia manufacturers, businesses, and other organizations. In 2024, GENEDGE provided \$676,502,000 in cost savings for businesses and generated \$1,211,836,288 in new and retained sales with \$54,658,851 in new client investments.

NCI plays a key role in this transformation by connecting learners, employers, and educators. Its partnership with GENEDGE expands this network, providing the infrastructure and expertise necessary to advance regional prosperity.

This move brings GENEDGE, a statewide political subdivision supporting Virginia's manufacturers through engineering, technology, and operational excellence, into direct collaboration with NCI, one of five higher education centers focused on workforce advancement and educational access. Together, the organizations will strengthen manufacturing, drive innovation, and expand hands-on training opportunities for workers and employers across the Commonwealth.

"GENEDGE's move into the Baldwin Building is a transformative moment for both of our organizations," said Joe Sumner, Executive Director of New College Institute. "By co-locating with NCI, GENEDGE is bringing world-class manufacturing expertise directly to the communities and companies that need it most, and we're proud to collaborate on workforce solutions that ensure Virginia remains at the forefront of advanced manufacturing."

**A Strategic Partnership for Economic Growth**

Through this new partnership, GENEDGE and NCI will work together to:

\*Expand Advanced Manufactur-

ing Training: Develop and deliver new technical programs, certifications, and simulations that prepare workers for high-demand manufacturing and engineering roles.

Support Small and Mid-Sized Manufacturers: Provide businesses across Virginia with access to the same high-level consulting, process improvement, and innovation services typically available to large corporations.

\*Connect Education and Industry: Link manufacturers with students, educators, and workforce programs to align classroom learning with the real-world needs of Virginia's industrial economy.

\*Accelerate Innovation: Use shared facilities, equipment, and expertise to pilot emerging technologies that enhance productivity, sustainability, and business growth.

"GENEDGE's mission is to help Virginia's manufacturers innovate, compete, and grow," said Scott Schein, Executive Director of GENEDGE. "Our new home within NCI's Baldwin Building provides a hub for collaboration, where education, business, and technology come together to strengthen the state's industrial base by increasing jobs, upskilling the workforce, motivating investment, and ultimately supporting sustained profitability."

"This partnership represents the best of what public collaboration can accomplish and provides endless options and possibilities for growth in the future," said Eric Jones, Chair of NCI's Board of Directors. "By bringing GENEDGE to NCI's Baldwin Building, we're not just providing office space. We're sharing a mission to strengthen Virginia's manufacturing base, empower our workforce, and drive meaningful economic growth in the Commonwealth."

"We are excited by this partnership and the opportunities to leverage NCI's premier facilities and resources with our staff in fulfilling our statewide mission to help Virginia's manufacturing, technology, and defense sectors innovate, compete, and grow. We've proudly been based in Martinsville since 1992 and look forward to many more years of success there in our new headquarters," said Gabriel LaMois, Chair of GENEDGE's Board of Trustees.

## Students groove to jazz, learn about the power of music



Martinsville High School Jazz Band Director Brian Joyce (center) talks to preschool students during Preschool in the Galleries on Nov. 19 at Piedmont Arts.



Robert Chernault of Brass 5 (right) shows students at Sanville Elementary how to use musical instruments at an in-school program presented by Piedmont Arts on Nov. 20.

Piedmont Arts brought two educational outreach programs to area students on Nov. 19-20. The programs served more than 590 students in Martinsville-Henry County.

Preschool in the Galleries hit a high note with a performance by the Martinsville High School Jazz Band on Nov. 19 at Piedmont Arts. Band director Brian Joyce led the band as they introduced their audience to the rhythms, melodies and instruments of jazz. Around 110 pre-K students from eight local schools jumped, jived and wailed to the performance.

Preschool in the Galleries is a series of programs designed to foster a love of the performing and visual arts in young children. The programs are free of charge to students and schools and feature performances presented by local organizations and school groups. A full schedule of events is available online at [PiedmontArts.org](https://PiedmontArts.org).

Brass 5 performed the program "Why Music?" for 480 students at Mt. Olivet and Sanville elementary schools on Nov. 20. The quintet's lively and interactive performance taught students about the power of music and why it is an integral part of our everyday lives.

Brass 5's performance was funded in part by a grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Piedmont Arts' educational outreach programs are presented free of charge to students and schools. The museum reaches nearly 7,000 students each year through its programming.

To support the museum's educational outreach initiatives, donations may be made to the Kay Smith Arts Education Fund at [PiedmontArts.org](https://PiedmontArts.org).

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

## Holiday handbell concert set for Dec. 6 in Martinsville

The Martinsville Handbell Ensemble will present its holiday concert, "Holly, Jolly Christmas," at 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 6, at First United Methodist Church, 146 East Main St. in Martins-

ville. The ensemble will be joined by Still Water, a select group from the Smith River Singers.

Admission is free, and an offering will be collected.

Be sure to like the Henry County Enterprise on Facebook

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

## Meetings

### Wednesday, December 3

The Henry County Planning Commission meets at 5 p.m., with public hearings that begin at 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Meeting Room, Henry County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Road.

### Thursday, December 4, 2025

Henry County School Board meets, 5:30 p.m., followed by closed session, Henry County Administration Building, 1st Floor Summerlin Room, 3300 Kings Mountain Road.

## Events

### Thursday, December 5

The Art Garden Christmas Tree Lighting, 4-6 p.m. in the Gravelly-Lester Art Garden. Holiday music, a visit from Santa, themed crafts and a snack of cookies and hot chocolate are available. Free and open to the public, sponsored by Brightspeed and Carter Bank. The tree is sponsored by Press Glass and Chip Wyatt of State Farm.

2nd annual Christmas Extravaganza, 5-9 p.m. special tree lighting ceremony in the courtyard at the Spencer-Penn Centre, 475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer.

Holidays at the Market – North Pole Jingle, 65 W Main St., Martinsville, 5-7 p.m.

### Saturday, December 6

Breakfast With Santa, 7 a.m. to 11 a.m., Bassett Volunteer Fire Department, 3735 Fairystone Park Hwy, Bassett.

Bassett Christmas Parade 2 p.m., Bassett.

Ridgeway Christmas Parade, 5:30 p.m., Town of Ridgeway.

2nd annual Christmas Extravaganza, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Storytime with Santa, free photos with

Santa and Mrs. Claus, more than 20 vendors. Food and beverage trucks. Spencer-Penn Centre, 475 Spencer Penn Road, Spencer. Christmas Tree Decorating Competition will be available for tours and voting.

### Sunday, December 7

Piedmont Arts' annual production of the Roanoke Symphony Holiday Pops Spectacular, 3 p.m. at Martinsville High School Auditorium. Altrusa will collect non-perishable food items for Grace Network in the lobby during the symphony's performance. Tickets are \$30 for reserved seating, \$20 for general admission and \$10 for students in grades K-12. Tickets available at PiedmontArts.org.

### Tuesday, December 9

Foster Gallery Reception, free reception for students and their families, 4-6 p.m., Piedmont Arts. Martinsville, Magna Vista and Bassett high schools and Carlisle Upper School students will have work on display in the Foster Gallery through Jan. 10.

## Ongoing

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

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

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

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

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

bologna, eggs, cooked apples, sausage gravy, biscuits, made-to-order pancakes, coffee, and juice. Dine in or carry out.

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

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

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

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

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

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

TOPS FIELDDALE 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 [mhcdcv.org/meeting-rsvp](http://mhcdcv.org/meeting-rsvp) for Zoom link.

## NCI

(cont. from page 1)



All of the award winners are pictured.

ed its twenty-fourth year of competition. Known as the STAGS (Students Technologically Advancing for Greater Success), the team is made up of high school students from Bassett, Magna Vista and Martinsville high schools, and home school students.

At the Blue Ridge Brawl off-season event, STAGS Team 1262 went undefeated in both the regular rounds and playoffs and earned the Red Banner as the event champion. They allied with Team 977 (Cometbots) and Team 401 (Copperhead Robotics – C-Team) during alliance selec-

tion and worked together, combining strategy and technical execution to secure the title.

In Patrick County, Aerial Machine and Tool received the Small Business Innovation in Technology Award. The company moved to the county in 1988.

## New members inducted into SAR chapter

The Colonel George Waller Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) recently inducted Charles G. Anthony, Jr. and Charles Graves Anthony, III, both descendants of Colonel Abram Penn, one of the most distinguished Revolutionary War leaders associated with the region that would become Henry and Patrick Counties.

Colonel Abram Penn was a prominent early settler of southern Virginia. Before the American Revolution, he served under General Andrew Lewis during Lord Dunmore's War, commanding a regiment while on campaign. When Pittsylvania County was partitioned in 1777 to form Henry County, Penn became an influential civic figure and was elected as a Delegate to the Virginia General Assembly in both 1777 and 1779.

In 1779, Penn was appointed captain and began organizing militia forces in support of the Revolution. During the harsh winter of 1780-1781, he raised the only regiment of troops from Henry

County and the surrounding frontier. He maintained active communication with Governor Patrick Henry and other leaders, ensuring that local forces were prepared, provisioned, and ready to march when called. After the formation of Patrick County, Penn became one of the original members of its first county court.

Penn died in 1801 and was buried at Poplar Grove in Patrick County, leaving to his descendants a legacy of leadership, patriotism, and enduring public service.

The Sons of the American Revolution is a civic organization dedicated to the preservation of history and genealogy relating to the era of the American Revolution. Membership is open to any male who can prove descent from an individual who provided patriot service—whether military, governmental, or documented acts of defiance against Great Britain.

Any gentleman interested in joining may contact Andy Doss at [andydoss@vt.edu](mailto:andydoss@vt.edu).

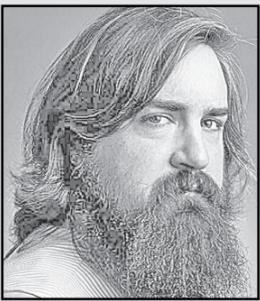


Colonel George Waller Chapter president Andy Doss, Charles Anthony, Graves Anthony. Photo contributed

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

# OPINION

## The threat of Communism



By Ben R. Williams

Just a few weeks ago, President Donald Trump called New York City Mayor-Elect Zohran Mamdani a “Communist lunatic.”

Trump, and many other voices on the right, have repeatedly referred to Mamdani as a Communist (although Trump has taken a different tone since Mamdani met with him at the White House last week and Trump became his new best friend, possibly because a bunch of vintage opium seeped into the White House water supply after the East Wing was demolished).

First off, Mamdani is not a Communist; he’s a Democratic Socialist. Democratic Socialists generally believe in New Deal-style social

programs and that the sort of welfare policies favored in Europe can coexist with a capitalist society. They support equitable taxation, which means they believe that the rich should pay their fair share (which they did prior to the 1980s, for the record).

Importantly, Democratic Socialists believe in Democratic elections and power being granted to the people. Under Communism, meanwhile, power tends to be accumulated by a small number of government officials and it quickly becomes a tyrannical system.

This column isn’t about the differences between Communism and Democratic Socialism, however. It’s about an observation.

There’s one thing that people who fearmonger about Communism generally have in common:

They’re old. Older than I am, anyway.

I was born in 1984, which means that I vaguely remember the tail-end of our nation’s era of relative peace and prosperity. Unfortunately, I didn’t have the opportunity to reap many of the benefits. I was a junior in high school when 9/11 happened, and I graduated from

college right before the 2008 financial crisis, the first of many once-in-a-lifetime economic disasters we’ve all had to endure over the last 20 years.

My entire adult life has been set against a backdrop of global conflict and a crumbling economy. For my generation, every time we start to get ahead, the rug gets pulled out from under us again.

However, Millennials should count ourselves lucky. At least we have memories of a time when things were different and a vain hope that we might one day return to those days. The Zoomers have never known a time when capitalism worked for them.

We have an entire generation of people entering the workforce who have never known a time when the average person could support a family on a single income. They have never seen income scale to match inflation. They don’t know that there was a time when a modest salary could buy a house.

Instead, they have seen billionaires exploit every loophole to avoid being taxed their fair share, causing them to siphon up all the money that should rightfully be-

long to the rest of us. They have watched these same billionaires work their tentacles into our government to shape it in their image while refusing to invest in the systems they seek to manipulate for their personal gain.

The only version of capitalism they have seen is end-stage capitalism, which posits that nothing can be immoral if it’s not explicitly illegal. If you tell a die-hard capitalist that maximizing profit at the expense of human lives is wrong, they will all respond the same way: “Hey, that’s capitalism. It may not be perfect, but it’s the best system we’ve got.”

Maybe that once rang true. But if you’re living within an economic system that has only exploited you without ever offering a single benefit, it’s pretty hard to believe someone when they tell you that it’s the best system around. And, I would imagine, it’s pretty hard to make younger generations fear Communism and Democratic Socialism when they’re already afraid of starving under capitalism.

To quote Voltaire, “If this is the best of all possible worlds, what then are the others?”

Column Sponsored by: Dr. Mensink

## Thanksgiving Traditions



**Morgan Griffith**

Representative

Like all families and communities across America, our region is preparing for an exciting, fun, and hopefully thankful Thanksgiving holiday!

Every year, this special holiday offers a time that brings many families and loved ones together.

For me and my family, the Thanksgiving meal is the centerpiece. My wife and others will prepare a warm and filling meal.

The dining table is headlined by the turkey, but we also give due consideration to the stuffing, mashed potatoes, casseroles, yams, green beans and other Thanksgiving delicacies.

Speaking of turkeys, we should all be thankful for Charles W. Wampler, Sr.

Wampler, a Shenandoah Valley native and considered the father of the modern turkey industry, was the first to hatch turkey eggs in an incubator, developing year-round confinement-based farming, and was also the first to contract with farms for poultry growth and helped to found the National Turkey Foundation.

Further, Wampler, who in 1922 was a Virginia cooperative extension agent in Rockingham County, may have never gotten started without A.L. Dean, who was the head of the department of poultry science at Virginia Tech in the 1920s.

When Wampler started, turkeys were

scarce, having almost been extirpated from Virginia.

Thanks to Wampler taking pressure off the wild turkey population and the Pittman-Robertson Act authored by Lexington’s own A. Willis Robertson, which dedicates money for wildlife conservation, the wild turkey is numerous.

Our communities will consume more than just food during the holiday!

Another staple of the Thanksgiving holiday is the Thanksgiving Day parade, and those include the Macy’s parade in New York City, the Philadelphia parade sponsored by 6abc Dunkin’ and the Detroit parade sponsored by Gardner White. This tradition is full of floats, balloons, dancers, celebrities and musical acts.

Over the years, numerous Ninth District bands and individuals have participated in these parades.

Further, while the weather might be chilly, it will not stop some from going outside and throwing a football around.

But most, like me, will stay in the comfort of our homes and watch football on TV.

Hometown hero, Wise County native and Super Bowl champion Carroll Dale played on Thanksgiving in 1970 as a member of the Green Bay Packers.

In that game, the Packers lost 16-3 to the eventual NFC Champion Dallas Cowboys.

While it was not a particularly memorable game for Dale, it proved to be an outlier compared to his overall season. He finished the 1970 season with 814 receiving yards and his third consecutive pro bowl selection.

Of course, the day following Thanksgiving is known as “Black Friday” because merchants often have their bottom lines moved from the red (losing money) to the black (making money).

It is the beginning of the traditional Christ-

mas shopping season.

This day features shoppers who brave the weather to stand in long lines in hopes of getting “deals.”

Shoppers not only try to use the purchasing power bonus deals on “Black Friday,” but on the following Monday as well.

Throughout the years, merchants and merchant associations have looked for ways to bring customers to their stores.

One innovative way created a Southwest Virginia cultural icon, the Mill Mountain Star.

The Star obviously rests on top of Mill Mountain, but it was created originally by Roanoke City and the Roanoke Merchants Association to attract visitors to downtown Roanoke for the Christmas holiday shopping season.

After building the special structure, Roanoke held a formal lighting ceremony on Thanksgiving Eve, November 23, 1949.

The cold night featured some public officials at the ceremony, including Roanoke Mayor A.R. Minton and Congressman Clifton Woodrum.

Also in attendance was legendary actor John Payne, a West Roanoke County native who lived in what is today Virginia’s Ninth District for a big part of his youth.

His most remembered film is the academy award-winning Christmas classic, *Miracle on 34th Street*. Payne plays the attorney Fred Gailey.

At least as recently as 2018, Macy’s in New York still featured pictures of John Payne and *Miracle on 34th Street* in their “Santaland.”

To me and many others, family and community inspire joy, love and a sense of belonging for which we all can be thankful.

P.S. Don’t forget last year’s Thanksgiving column where we laid out the historical justification for Virginia being home to the first Thanksgiving!

## Age – Don’t Focus on the Number

**Dr. Glenn Mollette**

We battle age at both sides of life. The young adult must prove they have enough knowledge and skills to do the job. The senior adult must prove they still have the health, skills and motivation to do the job. Both sides of the spectrum can be challenging.

Actually, at every level it’s the same. The forty-year-old doesn’t get a pass from proving he has the skills and desire to perform the tasks but often is given the first glance as a stronger candidate for the job.

When I was 20 years old, I was in college and serving as a senior pastor of a church in Lexington, Kentucky. I went on to several other senior pastoral positions in Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana. From age 20 to 30 I knew I was competing with men 30 to 55 who had more experience and could point to more success than I could. It all worked out and I did receive numerous opportunities and places to serve. At age 49, I was receiving calls from different churches in various states about serving as their pastor. I almost went to at least three of those opportunities. Around age 50 seemed to be a peak time for moving to a new senior pastoral position. I had vast experience, doubled and tripled attendance everywhere I had been and generated millions of dollars in contributions to the churches and their causes. For someone in my profession, 45 – 50 is a grand time.

I was fortunate that at age 50 I had found my place in life with my current job. It doesn’t feel like a job but a daily opportunity to serve and help ministers around the world to train for greater service and fulfill their callings in life.

My dad was another story. By the age of 55 he had worked about 37 years in the coal mines and he was done with that part of his life. Age 50 would be a hard time to begin a new career as a coal miner. There are so many jobs where 50 or 55 is a great age and some jobs where it’s not.

Regardless of what we do in life, we are to some extent competing with age. Unless we can prove it doesn’t matter. If we can prove it doesn’t matter then people forget about it. Someone is not too old or too young to do the job unless they prove they are too old or too young. President John F. Kennedy was 36 and he did the job. We have had elderly Senators and Representatives who have performed their jobs well and others who have obviously become too old to do their jobs.

Regardless of your age you have to prove yourself. Twenty-one might be too young, but maybe not if you are willing to work hard, educate and prove yourself. Eighty might be too old, but maybe not if you have the health, motivation and skills to keep going.

Don’t let the number be the determining factor. Evaluate your skills and motivation and do your best whatever the job or task.

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# OPINION

## Motivation, mood lighting and too many carrots

There's nothing like a great convention to get you inspired and ready to take on the world.

Convention planners must have lots of tricks to make that happen, too. Some of the aspects of conventions are genuine and useful – the reasons our companies send us to conventions – seminars and classes and lessons that teach us how to be much better in our work and perhaps everything we do.

Some of the aspects of conventions are the adult version of high school spirit week to get us all pumped up and excited.

Let's start with opening night. We all receive important-looking nametags on fancy lanyards. The names and titles are written big enough that we can almost read who someone else is without even having our glasses on.

The lanyards are so long that the nametags hang down to waist level. We are always having to look down at stomachs to figure out to whom we are talking. Some people figure out to tie up our lanyard in back so that it hangs higher in front. I did that to mine, then kept getting it twisted around to choke me, and it kept getting stuck in my bag handles and notebooks and in the food on my plates.

Between classes and events there is always food. On the first night, the cheese-and-vegetable trays had fancy-colored carrots cut lengthwise. Some were beige, some were whitish with reddish skins, and some were yellow. They were the hit of the reception.

There was a reception after that reception, and again, the trays featured those exciting carrots. Yum! What a fancy convention hall, to serve such exotic root vegetables.

The entrée at lunch was beef, but anyone who had requested a different kind of meal (kosher, vegetarian, halal, Alpha Gal, etc.) received an alternative meal. Guess what was included on the alternative meal plate? You

guessed it! Those fancy carrots, this time, cooked ...

By the fifth and sixth time of the carrots, they weren't so fancy anymore, and in fact, everyone probably would have appreciated just plain regular orange carrots.

The food at lunch was all that much more delicious because of the way we were brought into lunch – like superstars.

The cavernous main hall was dark, except for decorative lights high above, messages made of light shining on the walls and glowing red centerpieces. Music, such as "Eye of the Tiger" and the theme song from Rocky, was pumping loud as we walked in ready to conquer the world!

During the lunch periods we had excellent speakers who really hopped around the stage and shouted, but in a good way. It kept us paying attention, and their methods of delivery got their messages across for sure.

Over the course of the 3-day convention, I took away loads of various specific lessons and three major lessons. Of the three major lessons:

1. Your cell phones tell the world absolutely everything about you, for all time. There's not a place you go or a topic you look up that is private. A couple of classes taught us about targeting advertisements to extremely specific criteria. For example, if we want to sell cowboy boots, the digital marketing company can find anyone and everyone who has been to a rodeo or farm or hoedown over the past year (or decade) and, whenever those people are within five miles of our boot store or a competitor's boot store, it will send them ads for our boots. Furthermore, whenever they use their home's or work's wifi, our ads for our boots also will go to the phones, tablets, computers and TVs used by anyone at that place. The whole Big Brother aspect of modern advertis-



**Holly  
Kozelsky**

ing had me freaked out and also laughing at the relative naivete of the column I wrote last week, which was about how I am constantly getting ads for flower bulbs since I went on a daffodil-bulb shopping spree last week. If I only had known the depth of it!

2. The economy is going to hell in a handbasket. The overriding theme of several sessions was how to survive, in ways specific to the topic of the session, a terrible, failing, unpredictable economy. One point a speaker made was that we should do less communicating by email and more by phone, because people are afraid to make plans or spend money, so they delay their decisions, reservations and plans; once they finally make up their mind on something, we have to move quickly before time is up.

3. People are people, whether in day care or high school or a convention for professionals. We adults were impressed, motivated, kept compliant and satisfied, sent in the right direction and encouraged to behave through food, music and mood lighting. Whether it's preschoolers singing "Clean-up, clean-up, everybody do their part!" to pick up toys, high schoolers wearing pajamas on Tuesday for Spirit Week or professionals paying rapt attention to a speaker who came to the stage with flashing lights and "We Are the Champions" by Queen blaring on the speakers, we're ready to roll!

## National Collection Week underway for Operation Christmas Child



The collection season for Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse is underway, as nearly 5,000 drop-off locations open across the country. Individuals, families and groups across Virginia have the opportunity to pack

a shoebox gift filled with fun toys, school supplies, and personal care items for children in need and drop them off now during National Collection Week, Nov. 17 – 24.

Operation Christmas Child has been collecting and delivering

shoebox gifts to children worldwide for more than three decades. In 2025, Operation Christmas Child hopes to collect shoeboxes throughout Virginia to help with the global goal to reach another 12 million children. The project of Samaritan's Purse partners with local churches across the globe to deliver these tangible expressions of God's love to children in need.

"Every shoebox gift is an opportunity to tell a boy or girl that God loves them. That's why we do what we do," said Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse. "I'm thankful for every single person who packs a shoebox because these simple gifts open the door for the Gospel."

Participants can use the locator tool to find the nearest drop-off location and hours of operation as they make plans to drop off their shoebox gifts. It is searchable by city or ZIP code and signs at each location will identify the drop off.

Those who prefer the convenience of online shopping can browse [samaritanspurse.org/buildonline](http://samaritanspurse.org/buildonline) to select gifts matched to a child's specific age and gender, then finish packing the virtual shoebox by adding a photo and personal note of encouragement. Shoebox gifts built online go to the ends of the earth to children in some of the hardest-to-reach places—whether deep jungles, city slums, steep mountainsides, or one of the more than 1,000 remote Pacific islands.

Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, seeks to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world and, together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 232 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and territories.

## Holiday Run Festival and annual Toy Drive set for Dec. 6

Martinsville Speedway will once again host a Holiday Run Festival on Saturday, Dec. 6, the same day as the annual Christmas Track Laps for Toy Drive event at the famed short track.

The Holiday Run Festival will feature the Southside 10K run and 5K run or walk, with a portion of each entry fee going directly towards the toy drive's fundraising efforts, benefiting Grace Network of Martinsville and Henry County. This will be the 31st year Martinsville Speedway has hosted the toy drive giving fans the opportunity to drive around the historic half-mile by donating to the cause.

"The Annual Christmas Toy Drive is such an important event here in our community, bringing everyone together to support those throughout Martinsville Henry-County and beyond during the holiday season," said Clay Campbell, Martinsville Speedway President. "Grace Network has been an essential part of this fundraiser that truly keeps growing every year. It's a testament to the ability this place has to bring people together, and everything

Martinsville Speedway represents."

Those in the greater Martinsville region can start their morning with the Youth in Motion 5K, beginning at 9 a.m., or the Southside 10K, beginning at 10 a.m., then swap out their tennis shoes for tires during the track laps event at the speedway from 5 – 7 p.m. Community members can donate an unwrapped toy or \$25 for the opportunity to drive laps around the iconic Virginia track in their personal vehicles.

Those in attendance can enjoy an evening filled with festive fun with a Martinsville Speedway twist. Fans can grab a famous Martinsville Hot Dog and top off their meal with Christmas cookies available at the Hot Dog Stand. Afterwards, families and friends can head on over to Victory Lane for a picture with Santa ahead of the holiday season.

The donated toys and monetary donations will be distributed to area children through Grace Network of Martinsville and Henry County, which is a faith-based, first-stop center for resources for families in crisis. The or-

ganization supports those in the community who need support to keep a roof over their heads, homes warm and lighted, and food on the table with short-term assistance and long-term solutions. To learn more about the Grace Network of Martinsville and Henry County, visit [gracenetworkmhc.org](http://gracenetworkmhc.org).

Sponsors for Track Laps for Toy Drive include Brightspeed, Lester Group, Bassett Furniture, AEP, Patrick & Henry Community College, Lawless Welding, Sarver Properties & Cleaning, all of whom are dedicated members of the community helping to support the event.

For laps around the track, drivers must sign waivers and be 18 years of age or older with a valid state-issued driver's license. All participants must adhere to Virginia state laws regarding the usage of seat belts and child safety restraints.

For more information on the Toy Drive for Track Laps event, or details on the 2026 racing season at Martinsville Speedway, please visit [martinsvillespeedway.com](http://martinsvillespeedway.com).

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## LEGAL

The School Board of Henry County will hold a Public Hearing Monday, December 8 at 5 p.m. in the Third Floor Boardroom at the County Administration Building, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville, VA. The purpose of the hearing is for the At-Large Interim School board Member position. Interested candidates are asked to submit a resume and letter of interest to the school board clerk at [britney.meeks@henry](mailto:britney.meeks@henry).

## LEGAL

### Notice of Public Hearing

The City of Martinsville Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on December 17, 2025, beginning at 4:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the City of Martinsville Municipal Building located at 55 W. Church Street, Martinsville, VA, 24112, for those parties in interest to the following request:

1) **REQUEST for ALLEYWAY ABANDONMENT** - Application of Cody Williams, requesting the city's abandonment of an approximate sixteen (16) foot alleyway that is adjacent to property located at 209 Cleveland Avenue (Tax Map #: 43(02)B/A). The abandonment of streets, alleyways, or rights-of-way are a request that require review of the Martinsville Planning Commission and review and approval of Martinsville City Council.

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

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

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## Southwestern Health Region launches new maternal health website

The Southwestern Health Region has launched a new maternal health website that provides essential resources and information for mothers, families, healthcare providers, and community organizations. The centralized site combines maternal health resources from across state agencies and partner organizations.

The Virginia Department of Health created the comprehensive site in compliance with Executive Directive 11 (2025) as part of a statewide effort to improve maternal health.

"This enhanced website, informed by mothers, doctors, doulas, midwives and others in our community and around the Commonwealth who serve pregnant women, mothers and families, provides important information about the state of maternal health in Virginia," said Cynthia Morrow, MD, MPH, regional director for the Southwestern Health Region. "We hope to empower our mothers and families with resources and information to assist them with healthy birth outcomes."

The new website includes resources for:

- Pregnant and postpartum women
- Families and partners
- Healthcare providers
- Community organizations

Preliminary numbers for 2024 show 15 maternal deaths in Virginia due to natural causes, a decrease since the peak in 2021. From 2019 to 2023, there were 26 maternal deaths and 62,022 live births in the Southwestern Health Region, resulting in a maternal mortality rate of 41.9 per 100,000 live births, compared with a state average of 34.5.

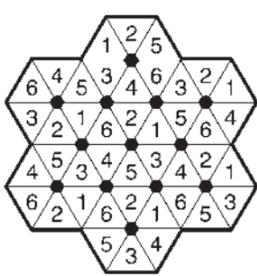
Certain communities, including rural and underserved areas, face poorer maternal health outcomes. Maternal mortality rates for Black and Hispanic women are more than double those of non-Hispanic White women. Experts say unequal access to critical care and support before, during, and after pregnancy contributes to these disparities.

"More than 80 percent of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable. In Virginia, we have the (See Southwestern p. 9)

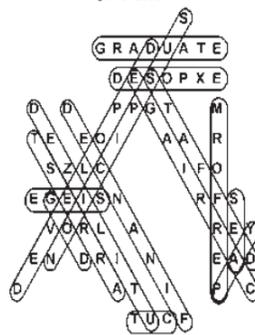
## Puzzle Answers!

### SNOWFLAKES

solution



### UNDER



### SCRAMBLERS

solution

1. Impart; 2. Clean;
3. Enemy; 4. Blonde

Today's Word

**LEMON**



answer



### Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

## Thank you for reading

## Sports Schedule

The following are the dates and times of local high school teams and their games for the week of **December 1-6:**

12/1	5pm	Girls Basketball	SVA at Carlisle
	6pm	Girls Basketball	Martinsville at Reidsville
12/2	6:30pm	Boys Basketball	Carlisle at Blue Ridge
	7pm	Girls Basketball	Bassett at Patrick County
	7pm	Girls Basketball	Magna Vista at Dan River
	7pm	Boys Basketball	Patrick County at Bassett
	7pm	Boys Basketball	Dan River at Magna Vista
	7:30pm	Boys Basketball	Morehead at Martinsville
12/3	6pm	Wrestling Bassett – Quad	at Magna Vista
	6pm	Wrestling Magna Vista – Quad	at Magna Vista
	7pm	Girls Basketball	Franklin County at Bassett
	7pm	Girls Basketball	Magna Vista at Abingdon
	7pm	Boys Basketball	Bassett at Franklin County
12/4	5:30pm	Girls Basketball	Carlisle at Chatham Hall
	7pm	Boys Basketball	Abingdon at Magna Vista
12/5	TBD	Girls Basketball	Magna Vista vs E.C. Glass (William Fleming HS)
	2pm	Wrestling Bassett at Hidden Valley	
	2pm	Wrestling Magna Vista at Hidden Valley	
	5pm	Swim & Dive Bassett vs Magna Vista (Martinsville YMCA)	
	5:30pm	Girls Basketball	Martinsville at Bassett
	7pm	Boys Basketball	Martinsville at Bassett
	7:30pm	Boys Basketball	Magna Vista at McMichael
12/6	10am	Wrestling Bassett at Hidden Valley	
	10am	Wrestling Magna Vista at Hidden Valley	

### Super Crossword

Answers

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

# Crossing the Lines

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

## Board urged to act on proposed solar ordinance

Planning Commission leaders urged the Patrick County Board of Supervisors to act on a proposed solar ordinance at its Nov. 17 meeting.

Planning Commission Chairman Kurt Bozenmayer offered a timeline about work on the solar issue, and noted the county's stance on solar energy began in 2022, when the potential for a solar energy 'farm' was first discussed.

"In January of 2025, the Board of Supervisors asked the Berkley Group to formulate the appropriation resolution documentation for Patrick County to be a no-solar county. The Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to amend the comprehensive plan and the solar ordinance," he said.

The Planning Commission received both an amendment and a draft ordinance from the Berkley Group, but several members felt it was not adequate.

"So, another solar ordinance was written. This was after the comprehensive plan was amended to say that Patrick is not solar-friendly on a utility scale. We've been back and forth on this ordinance, and it brings us up to this fall," he said.



Planning Commission Chair Kurt Bozenmayer urged the Board of Supervisors to act on the proposed solar ordinance amendment then County Administrator Beth Simms looked on. Following closed session, the board accepted Simms resignation.

## New interim county administrator aims for collaboration and accountability



Michael McGuinness was named Interim County Administrator.

Michael McGuinness hit the ground running after being appointed interim Patrick County administrator following the Nov. 17 Board of Supervisors meeting. He said his focus is creating a collaborative environment where county employees can do their best work.

The 62-year-old described his appointment as humbling and an honor.

"It's not just a job for me to pass through and say, 'Hey look at me.' I'm a nobody, I represent our citizens. It might not be much to anybody, but to me it's the world. I am the county administrator because

of the people of Patrick County," McGuinness said.

Following the meeting, McGuinness returned home briefly before heading back to the office at 2 a.m., working until 7 p.m. Tuesday. "I stayed until 7 p.m. Tuesday night with stuff that we're going to start doing, initiatives, and some things I have for our team and stuff," he said.

Even after arriving home around 8 p.m. Wednesday, he said he was ready to continue working. "I'm here because I'll die in Patrick County, and before I die, I owe it to the people that have welcomed me and my wife so warmly," he said.

## Hometown Christmas returns with full slate of activities

Patrick County's Hometown Christmas celebration returns Dec. 5-7 with a full lineup of festive events across the county.

The holiday weekend begins Friday, Dec. 5, with the ninth annual Grand Illumination at 6 p.m. on Main Street in Stuart. The ceremony includes the lighting of the community Christmas tree in front of the Patrick County Courthouse by Grand Marshals of this year's parade. Many Main Street businesses will stay open late for holiday shopping, and Santa will be available for photos at the Star Theatre starting at 7 p.m.

Events continue Saturday, Dec.

6, with a full day of holiday activities and shopping opportunities, including:

- Mistletoe Market at the Stuart Farmers' Market (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)
- Holiday Bazaar at Stuart Church of Living Water (8 a.m.-2 p.m.)
- Stuart Elementary PTO "Winter Blender" (9 a.m.-1 p.m.)
- Patrick County Library Open House (10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.)
- Breakfast with Santa at The Landmark Center (8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m., reservations recommended)
- Free hot chocolate at Circle K (1 p.m.-4 p.m.)

## Supervisors delay codification work after concerns raised

Questions about outdated ordinances prompted the Patrick County Board of Supervisors to table that issue until its January meeting after concerns were raised.

Before the vote, Kurt Bozenmayer, chairman of the planning commission, said the codification document posted on the county website combines all county ordinances into one 295-page file prepared by Municode, a Florida-based company.

"My question really is, was any review of these ordinances done prior to submitting this stuff to Municode? Because in looking very briefly at the document as it was posted on the website, I see some things that appear to be somewhat obsolete," he said, and also noted

that the codification documentation prepared for the board's approval included the original 2022 solar siting ordinance.

He noted that under the Community Development section, the only listed ordinance refers to the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), approved in 1974.

"Now I've been in this county paying taxes for 23 years, and I have not heard or seen any activities from the county's Industrial Development Authority. The only such authority that I know that's even close to that is the Economic Development Authority," he said.

If one outdated ordinance remains, he questioned whether others may have been overlooked.

## Holiday Market returns to Fairy Stone State Park



Fayerdale Hall

Celebrate the spirit of the season and support local artisans at the 4th Annual Holiday Market at Fairy Stone State Park. It will be held on Small Business Saturday, Nov. 29, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., in the Fayerdale Hall Conference Center.

This event showcases a variety of local vendors offering handmade crafts, baked goods, seasonal décor and unique gifts, perfect for checking off your holiday shopping list while supporting small businesses and local makers.

Admission to the market is free,

and the regular parking fee will be waived for shoppers. Visitors are encouraged to bring cash for vendors who may not accept cards.

Fairy Stone State Park, one of Virginia's original six state parks, is known for its beautiful lake views and legendary fairy stones. The 4,700-acre park offers more than 10 miles of trails, cabins and a range of educational programs.

For more information about the Holiday Market or Fairy Stone State Park, visit [www.virginia-stateparks.gov/fairy-stone](http://www.virginia-stateparks.gov/fairy-stone) or call 276-930-2424.

The P&HCC Fab Lab will offer DIY Christmas stocking personalization from 10 a.m. to noon, giving visitors a chance to create a custom keepsake or holiday gift.

At 2 p.m., the 53rd annual Patrick County Christmas Parade, presented by One Family Productions, steps off with this year's theme, "The Magic of the Season." From dazzling lights to nostalgic music, the parade celebrates the wonder that makes Christmas-time special.

Festivities wrap up Sunday with a free ukulele concert, "A Very Maui Christmas," at the Star Theatre. The Mt. Airy Ukulele Orchestra performs at 5 p.m.; doors open at 4 p.m.

Hometown Christmas is organized by the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Stuart, One Family Productions and local merchants. For details, contact the Chamber at 276-694-6012 or visit [Patrick-Chamber.com](http://Patrick-Chamber.com).



1-3-5-7-9



1-3-5-7-9



1-4-7-9:15



1-4-7-9:15



1-3-5-7-9

**tickets \$5**

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beside Walmart

276-656-3456 [hollywoodcinema.net](http://hollywoodcinema.net)



# PUZZLE TIME



## FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ... OR DARE!

IKL  
PLINCE  
PETTM  
♥ARDE  
TRIDGE  
♥TSI  
MIKS  
PYMIL  
♥ADM  
♥RYAPLE  
♥ARELG  
♥TEMI

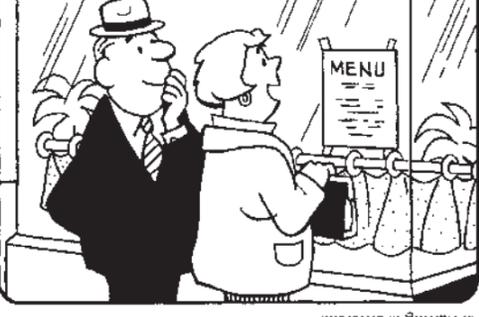
Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. **HAGNEC** becomes **CHANGE**). Prepare to use only **ONE** word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥**RATHE** becomes **HATER** or **EARTH** or **HEART**). Fit each string's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

## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIKOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Curtain is shorter. 2. Menu is smaller. 3. Plant is not as tall. 4. Collar is different. 5. Pocket is added to coat. 6. Farting is different.

## MAGIC MAZE • UNDER

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

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

Arrest	Dog	Pay	Staffed
Carriage	Exposed	Perform	Suspicion
Cut	Financed	Sea	Utilized
Developed	Graduate	Siege	

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## Super Crossword

GROUP OF HERBS

<b>ACROSS</b>	<b>DOWN</b>	<b>ACROSS</b>	<b>DOWN</b>
1 Tasks	1 Skull parts	59 Aversion	13 "Preach it!"
5 Witty remark	2 Worker welfare org.	62 User's guide	14 "Sleeper" co-star
11 Pinnacles	3 Rodent-built channel blockers	64 Celtic language	15 Old fast jet, for short
16 Inaccurate	4 "Vexations" composer	65 Riddle, part 4	16 Worker purifying petroleum
19 Sailing	5 Churlish sort	69 Je ne — quoi	17 Breath-holding reef explorers, e.g.
20 Ablaze	6 Difficult task	73 Incendiary	18 Lose color
21 Pinnacles	7 Gridiron gp.	74 Most felonies	24 Bowl-shaped frying pan
22 Money for the senior yrs.	8 Prefix with term or week	75 Most frequently	25 Brand of PCs and tablets
23 Start of a riddle	9 Eye, to poets	79 Golf legend	29 Warship with three banks of rowers
26 Guided	10 Casual shirt	81 Picnic pest	31 Letters alter els
27 Redeemers	11 Tiered temples	82 Lifelong pal, informally	32 Hotelier Helmsley
28 Tally	12 Pale tan	84 Tiny hairlike structures	33 Otherwise
29 Forest growth		85 Not crying	34 Huskies, e.g.
30 Comics cry		87 Currency of Latvia	36 Expand on
31 Omitted, as a syllable		89 Gives the means	37 Swiss — variety
35 Used a scull		91 "— dabba dool"	38 — Lama
37 USN VIP		92 Lick like a cat	39 Math game with match-sticks
39 Riddle, part 2		94 Riddle, part 5	40 "I'm — loss"
44 Riddle, part 3		96 End of the riddle	41 Resign from waste
47 "Mayday!"		99 Part of ROY G. BIV	42 Hearth
48 Take to the road		100 A stage past embryonic	43 Succinct
49 Neighbor of Georgia		101 Protested unpeacefully	45 Just slightly
50 Aroma detector		102 Gp. checking baggage	46 Rips into
52 Stain-fighting toothpaste, e.g.		104 Actresses Jiljian and Blyth	
54 "Year One" director		105 Joan — (French saint)	
55 Gun, in slang			
56 Asian "way"			
58 "Three's Company" co-star			
Suzanne			

## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- The blocks of the Washington Monument are held together by gravity and friction, rather than mortar.
- Ancient Romans gave a hard "no" to the practice of eating butter, with Pliny the Elder referring to butter as "the choicest food among barbarian tribes." Why? Mainly because they used it for treating burns and thus thought of it as a medicinal salve rather than food.
- Pencils have never been made from lead.
- The leather diamond patch on the outside of backpacks, called a "lash tab," was initially used by mountaineers to secure their gear.
- Harvard University is older than calculus.
- Some research has shown that up to 40% of a worker ant colony may remain idle while their comrades soldier on with the labor. But before you label them lazy, one theory, based on scientific observation, is that keeping a team of workers on standby allows the colonies to stay productive.
- Heinz Ketchup has a "speed limit" of .028 miles per hour, set by the company as an indicator of the product's consistency.
- "Watching paint dry" is an actual occupation for some folks, requiring an observation of the changing colors and particles of the substance as it dries, both on walls and under a microscope.
- Manhattan, New York's most popular transportation hub, Grand Central Terminal, is radioactive.
- The tradition of serving ham at Christmas comes from the Norse festival of Yule, where a boar was sacrificed to honor the deity Freyr.

\*\*\*

**Thought for the Day:** "A strong nation, like a strong person, can afford to be gentle, firm, thoughtful and restrained. It can afford to extend a helping hand to others. It's a weak nation, like a weak person, that must behave with bluster and boasting and rashness and other signs of insecurity."  
— Jimmy Carter

## Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

### DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging  
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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## SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

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

### DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆

◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

**B**EWARE OVER-AGGRESSIVENESS IN INITIATING THE THROUGH-SWING WITH YOUR FEET AND LEGS TO THE POINT WHERE YOUR BODY SPINS TARGETWARDS TOO QUICKLY.

START DOWN WITH A SMOOTH SHIFT OF WEIGHT TO YOUR FORWARD FOOT, ALONG WITH CONTROLLED SHUTTling OF YOUR KNEES TARGETWARDS.

KEEPING YOUR RIGHT HEEL GROUNDED WHILE WORKING ON THE KNEE ACTION WILL GIVE YOU THE PROPER FEEL.

## 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!

Convey

RAMPIT

Scrub

LANCE

Foe

MEENY

Flaxen

BOLDEN



"He's a model husband — unfortunately this model happens to be a \_\_\_\_\_."

### TODAY'S WORD

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# Bulldog Beat

Issue XI

We are focusing on what students and staff are thankful for during this Thanksgiving season. Over the past week, and continuing next week, our reporters have been busy gathering responses from across Martinsville Middle School.

Our SCA 6th grade homeroom reporters—*Nevaeh Daniels, Adelaide Brent, Semaiya Craighead, and Mercy Moore*—along with our 7th grade reporters—*KaZairah Adkins, Alanna Gerlach, Shaurya Mahajan, Katie Wall, Miriam Carter, and Jade Holland-Dallas*—have been hard at work interviewing students and staff about their gratitude during this holiday season.

Below are the responses they collected:

**What Are You Thankful For This Thanksgiving?**

- **Destinee:** “My friends, teachers, just waking up early in the morning or late at night.”
- **Ally:** “Jesus, my friends and family, the jobs that keep us safe, and the people closest to me.”
- **Winter:** “My family all being together and being able to see everyone reunite. Being with those who love me.”
- **Mrs. Woody:** “I am thankful for Jesus, my job at Martinsville Middle School, and being with awesome kids all day long.”
- **Ms. Clemons:** “Being able to spend time with my friends, family, and my new puppy.”
- **Jade:** “I am thankful for food, clothing, family, health, and money.”
- **Jessie Sanchez:** “I am thankful for being able to spend time with my whole family.”
- **Cameron Foddrell:** “I am thankful for celebrating with family, food, and with friends.”
- **Ms. Robinson:** “I am thankful for my family and my health.”
- **Nurse Johnson:** “I am thankful for my family.”
- **Alanna Gerlach:** “I am thankful for my biological family and my step-family. They are all my family. I love them so much.”
- **Lily DeJesus:** “I am thankful that my family is coming to see me for Thanksgiving.”
- **Margot Sharp:** “I am thankful for friends, family, my cat, food, and for sleep.”
- **Sofia Marcial:** “I am thankful that I get to spend Thanksgiving with my family and friends.”
- **Mr. Lynn:** “I am thankful for being with my family.”

- **Mr. Dillard:** “I am thankful for my family and my life.”
- **Jycere Moorman:** “I am thankful for food and family.”
- **Mr. Pell:** “I am thankful for my family.”
- **Trinity Hairston:** “I am thankful for my family and friends.”
- **Gabby Murillo:** “I am thankful for my family, love, support, and just being able to get all my family together again on that special day.”
- **Maireny:** “I am thankful for family, friends, food, and also being in a warm house with my family.”
- **Daleyza:** “I am thankful for life because living is one of the rarest things.”
- **Mrs. Scales:** “I am thankful for my family and what they have done for me, and my relationship with God because He is a good God.”
- **Ms. Millner:** “I am thankful for my relationship with the Lord.”
- **Adelyn McKenzie:** “I am thankful for my friends and family because they are always there for me.”
- **Adelaide Brent:** “I am thankful for food because it is yummy, friends because they are good, and family because I love them.”
- **Amirah Shareef:** “I am thankful for having dinner with my family and eating delicious food.”
- **Ms. Anderson:** “I am thankful for my family because it is like a safe haven and they are always caring.”

## Weekly Learning Report

By *Semaiya Craighead, 6th grade SCA homeroom reporter*

“On Monday and Wednesday, we took our Math and Reading SGA, also known as a growth assessment. In Science, we are still working on watersheds and wetlands. In Math, we have started learning about the vertical form of equations. In Reading, we have been reading about Fear and Phobias in our HMH books. We recently read the biography of Edgar Allan Poe and have been answering the main idea and supporting details for each section of the biography. See you next week! Have a great Thanksgiving!”

**Staff Spotlight Interview: School Bookkeeper, Mrs. Judy Gravely - Interview by Miriam Carter, 6th grade SCA homeroom reporter**

1. How long have you worked at Martinsville

Middle School? “Three and a half years.”

2. What inspired you to become a bookkeeper? “I like to keep track of money.”
3. What does a typical day look like for you here at school? “I record all the substitutes for the day, then the rest of the day is a whirlwind of ordering supplies, picking up supplies, filling out orders for supplies, and writing lots of checks.”
4. What is your favorite part of your job? “Getting supplies that the teachers need to teach their students.”
5. What kinds of things do you help manage with school money? “Student and teacher supplies, athletic supplies, concessions, and items for staff and student incentives.”
6. How do you help teachers and staff with their budgets or purchases? “I look for and search for the best prices on items.”
7. What’s something about your job that most students might not know? “I am in charge of payroll for substitutes and custodians.”
8. What is one of the most important skills you need to be a good bookkeeper? “Being able to manage my own money, so I can do a good job managing the school’s money.”
9. What is the hardest part of your job? “Last minute requests for supplies.”
10. What is something you’re most proud of doing for Martinsville Middle School? “First, surprising the staff with little thank you incentives, and secondly, keeping the finances out of the red.”
11. What does being a Bulldog mean to you? “Being proud of yourself and the school.”
12. How do you help support the fun activities and special events our school has? “Making sure that all programs and activities have the needed supplies and assisting in the setup.”
13. What advice would you give to students who want to work in an office or handle money one day? “You must have good math skills, be able to balance a checkbook, and have good documentation for audit purposes.”

That wraps up this week’s edition of the Bulldog Beat! We are so proud of our student reporters for capturing the voices of our MMS family. As we head into Thanksgiving, remember to take time to appreciate the people and moments that make your life meaningful. Wishing everyone a restful, joyful, and thankful holiday!

## Chapman named director of library system

The Blue Ridge Regional Library board of trustees has appointed Melissa Chapman director of Blue Ridge Regional Library system. Chapman, who has been serving as interim director following the retirement of Rick Ward, has served as BRRL’s cataloging librarian since 2012. She will assume the role December 1.

“Over the course of the last several months, our Board has conducted a search and a series of interviews to hire a Blue Ridge Regional Library director that will lead the staff with collaborative innovation and foresight. We are confident that Melissa will work to ensure continued growth and progress for the library system as the staff serves the community in new and exciting ways,” said Rebecca Adcock,

BRRL board chairperson.

Chapman earned a master’s degree in library and information studies at UNC-Greensboro and a bachelor’s degree in Anthropology at James Madison University.

“I am honored to serve the community alongside the team at the Blue Ridge Regional Library system,” Chapman said, adding, “My goal is to ensure it continues as a vital resource for information, learning, and connection.”

Founded in 1974, Blue Ridge Regional Library is a system of five branch libraries and a bookmobile serving Martinsville, Henry County, and Patrick County. To learn more about the library system and its programs, visit <https://www.brll.lib.va.us/index.php>.



## Virginia high school seniors invited to enter STEAM-H essay contest

Gov. Glenn Youngkin, First Lady Suzanne S. Youngkin, and the Virginia Council on Women announced the 15th annual Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics, and Healthcare (STEAM-H) essay contest for female high school seniors in Virginia. Applicants must have at least a 3.0 GPA and submit entries by Friday, Jan. 30, 2026. Essays will be judged on quality and, for need-based awards, financial need. Winners will be notified in March, with scholarships presented in the spring.

The contest aims to encourage young women to pursue careers in STEAM-H fields and has awarded more than \$255,000 in scholarships since its inception. More information and application guidelines are available at [www.women.virginia.gov](http://www.women.virginia.gov).

## Southwestern

(cont. from page 6)

expertise, resources and tools to support women as they navigate the experiences of pregnancy,” said Vanessa Walker Harris, MD, director of the Office of Family Health Services. “The VDH Maternal Health website can change families’ lives by making information and help readily available.”

Leading causes of pregnancy-related deaths include cardiac conditions, mental health challenges, and substance abuse, many of which are medically preventable. The website addresses barriers to care and provides resources to support quality healthcare and wraparound services for women.

For more information on maternal health resources, contact your local health department or visit the new site.

## County of Henry Important Tax Notice

**2025 Personal Property Tax  
(Personal Property ONLY)  
Tax Deadline  
Monday, December 15, 2025**

Tax bills have been mailed insofar as possible, but failure to receive bill does not relieve taxpayer of any additional charges of penalty or interest that will accrue under the law for failure to pay the tax assessment.

Payments mailed must be **postmarked  
December 15, 2025** to not incur a late fee.

Notice is hereby given that the Treasurer’s Office of Henry County will be open Monday thru Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to receive payment. You may **pay online at [www.henrycountyva.gov](http://www.henrycountyva.gov)**

Scott B. Grindstaff – Henry County Treasurer

# Be the Change

(cont. from page 1)



Richard's Dinner, 2011.

year," Norman said of the youth board, which held its annual W. Dan Prince III Thanksgiving Eve Dinner on Wednesday.

The group prepared to serve more than 5,000 people with funding from the Harvest Foundation, Norman said. "We make sure it's tasty and we teach the young people, first of all, how to serve. Second of all, how to prepare a meal. Third of all, we teach them about the joy of doing something nice for somebody else."

Richard's Dinner is the effort Norman has always been most closely associated with.

"I love to cook. I love to serve. I love bringing joy. I enjoy teaching other people and giving them the opportunity to do something fantastic," he said. "I have two sisters that love to bake. Since the inception we have tried to provide homemade desserts. Every year my sisters bake and ice cupcakes. Their gifting is in baking, so they use it," he said.

"My father knows every pig path in Henry County. He's available to help people when even Google Maps can't find the way. Many of the people that run the kitchen are accomplished restaurateurs, chefs, cooks. When we come down to the main event, I try to get out of the way and let everybody do what they do



Richard's Dinner, 2012.

best," he said.

Norman said he lives by advice passed down to him. "Somebody much smarter than me said, 'Become the change you want to see in the world.' So I'm the change. Do something selfless. Work within the skills that you have. Teach somebody, love on somebody, teach them how to do something, and teach them to be bigger than themselves."

"One of my protégés is my niece, and she's been involved with the dinner since she was born," he said. "The first year that she came, I carried her in my arms. And she's learned to serve, and I'm very, very proud of her and the things that she has accomplished, along with dozens of other people. I have the same people that come year after year after year. I had a couple of people come by checking in, just making sure we're going to be on tap for Wednesday morning."

Norman invites other youth to come and cook, even if they start out inexperienced. "Even if they're not good at it, that's my problem," he said. "My problem is to teach you how to do something and find something in your skill set that you can use to contribute to the effort and make the world a better place."

He said the dinners began with two men who "had a dream that they were just going to make one day better." They walked the streets looking for people who needed a meal.

"We had a day where nobody had to be alone. It's not about food. Food's everywhere. If you look around, you can get a food box. It's about ensuring that no one "should ever be alone on a holiday. So, we provide you some food. We provide you some companionship," Norman said.

"We want to have conversations. Sometimes we have music. There's usually a piano or a tape deck or something around where we can play some music. Sometimes we sing. You never know what we might do, but we share joy. We make sure that nobody is ever alone on a holiday," Norman said. "I think Dan and Richard would both be excited about that."

He invited the community to join in no matter their time constraints. "Be bold. Come out. Be bold. Show up. If you show up for five minutes, I'll give you a five-minute job. If you show up for five hours, I'll give you a five-hour job. Get involved and be a part of the solution. Find the things that we have in common and gravitate toward that. Make the world a little bit better place."

# Norman

(cont. from page 1)



Scarlett Norman lands the starring role in Greensboro's "The Wizard of Oz."



Scenes from the Community Theatre of Greensboro's 30th annual production of the "Wizard of Oz."



Hillcrest Baptist Church had a program called God's Kids. I was one of the actors in that."

She said she has always wanted to star as Dorothy. "It has always been one of my favorite roles personally, one of my dream roles because I relate to Dorothy a lot. I feel she's a very emotional, complex character. She feels on a deeper level, and she takes this really emotional journey throughout the whole story, and I really can relate to so many things." She added that she enjoys the character's attachment to home and how she cares for her friends.

Norman said transitioning into playing Dorothy was easy, and that she already had the

right hair type. "Thankfully I was blessed with natural curls. Judy Garland also had curly hair when she played Dorothy, so pretty much all I have to do is braid my hair. I do it in like a little twist up near the top."

The dress she wore in the play was handmade, and Norman created the red slippers herself. "I actually made them. I got plain tan character shoes, and spray painted them red. I got these red sequin strings from Hobby Lobby, and I glued those on there." She also added bows and a large stone to the middle of each shoe.

The first performance of the production was held during the day for schoolchildren, and Nor-

man said the young crowd met the cast's energy. "They screamed at pretty much everything. They loved it. It was a very uplifting first show and it really gave us a good jump start into our journey down the Yellow Brick Road."

Norman said the experience has strengthened her confidence and stage presence.

"I am so honored that I am able to play this role as Dorothy and it has been so fun and it's a terrific show, and I would highly encourage anybody young or old that wants to get involved in theater to please get involved because it is really an incredible experience and it will change you for the better."

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THANK YOU FOR READING  
THE HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

# Crowds pack streets for Martinsville–Henry County Christmas parade



Crown Holdings, Inc. sponsored the 2025 Martinsville–Henry County Christmas Parade.



Devin Pendleton sits on Sovah Health's Wicked-themed float as Tammy Pearson stands nearby during the Martinsville–Henry County Christmas Parade.

**By Jessica Dillon**  
Hundreds lined the streets Nov. 22 for the Martinsville–Henry County Christmas Parade, the region's first parade of the season. The event featured more than 100 entries and stretched nearly two hours. Local restaurant owner and former city council member Tammy Pearson served as one of

the hosts. Devin Pendleton, coordinator of Campus Life & Fine Arts at Patrick & Henry Community College, was this year's Grand Marshal. "It was fantastic because he was the first gay person that was out and he was the first gay Marshal in our parade," parade orga-

nizer Charles Roark said. "And of course, you know, I always say Devin makes gay look cool, and it was an honor to have him as our Grand Marshal."

Roark said he had never seen someone more enthusiastic about the parade than Pendleton. "He does parades well. He's just an incredible guy to host a parade," he said. Roark added that callers to his local "Buzz Show" shared similar praise: "Devin does it well."

Roark said two entries stood out as his favorites this year, beginning with Crown Holdings, the parade's sponsor. He said the company goes "all in," even renting a professional float.

"It's a company-wide thing," he said. "We start preparing in summer and tell them about it, but they really buy into doing this. They know it's a big community day, and they're so nice. They have the best attitude."

He also praised Sovah Health, which is known for its award-winning parade floats and Fast Track booths. This year, Sovah

created a Wicked-themed float complete with LED Isis wings and a set designed to mimic the wizard's room.

"They follow the theme to the key," Roark said, noting that Sovah suggested the parade's theme: "Hollywood Christmas Movies." The most popular movie representation was The Grinch—and one entry even handed onions to the parade hosts.

Roark clarified how parade entry fees are used. "We have to buy insurance and all this kind of thing," he said. "So we've got to cover the cost of it, and the costs continue to rise like everything else." Restrooms, rentals and other logistics add to the expenses, he said, noting that very little profit is made. "This is a must-see event for our town."

He thanked the community for its support and shared his holiday wish: "I hope everybody can have a good Christmas." Weather concerns were among the reasons for the parade's early date, he added.

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## Smith River Singers to present holiday concert Dec. 15

The Smith River Singers will present "Merry & Bright: The Gift of Presence, the Pure Joy of Music" at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 15, at the Galilean House of Worship, 5078 A L Philpott Hwy. in Martinsville.

Doors open at 6:15 p.m.

The concert, featuring the select ensemble Still Water, will be performed under the direction of Dr. Pamela Randall with accompaniment by pianist Beth Chapman, along with strings and percussion.

Admission is free, and an offering will be collected.

Thank you for reading

# Christmas Open House

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