

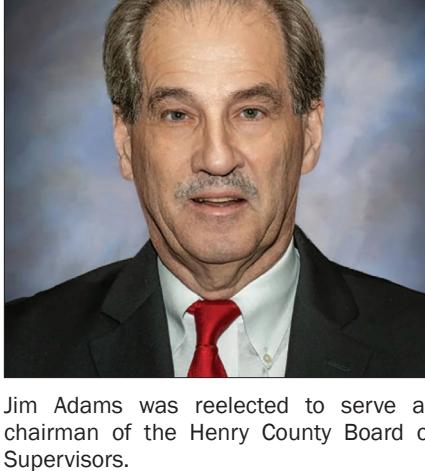
HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026

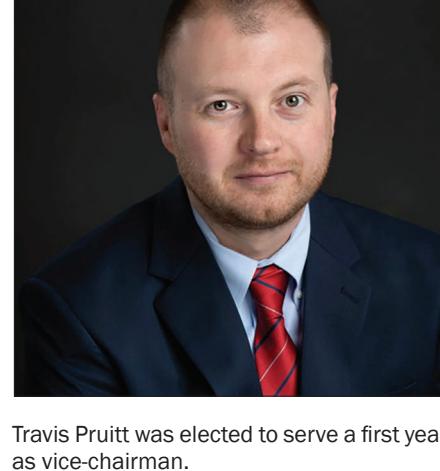
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Adams, Pruitt to lead county in 2026



Jim Adams was reelected to serve as chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors.



Travis Pruitt was elected to serve a first year as vice-chairman.

By Taylor Boyd

The Henry County Board of Supervisors elected its chairman and vice-chairman for the upcoming year during its 2026 reorganizational meeting on Jan. 2.

Jim Adams, of the Blackberry District, was chosen to serve as chairman.

Travis Pruitt, of the Ridgeway District, was elected as vice-chairman.

Adams was nominated by Pruitt for the chairman position. As he was the only nominee, Adams was selected to lead the board for the thirteenth time during his 24-year tenure.

Adams thanked the board for their confidence in selecting him as chairman.

"I'm willing to serve, but this is not a one-person show, and I think you all know that. It collectively should always be the group making decisions" he said.

Adams also asked his fellow board members to make it known if they wish to serve as chairman in the future.

"I think we could perhaps have other people serving as well. So

please make it known during the course of the year, 'hey, I'd like to be chairman, I'd like to be vice-chairman,' that type of thing. That strengthens any organization," Adams said.

Pam Cobler, of the Reed Creek District, nominated Pruitt for the vice-chairman position. He won the position with a unanimous vote.

Pruitt said he appreciates being chosen as the board's vice-chairman.

"I'm halfway through the term now, and I look forward to serving as the vice-chairperson," Pruitt said.

In other matters, the board:

*Set the regular meeting dates for 2026. The board will meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month, except for December, when the meeting will be held on Dec. 15 to avoid scheduling conflicts with the holidays.

*Approved bylaws for 2026.

*Adopted the fiscal year 2026-2027 county budget calendar.

*Scheduled its 2026 Planning Session for Feb. 9 at 3 p.m.

*Heard an update on the real estate reassessment.



Petition drive to oust mayor gains momentum

By Jessica Dillon

Residents gathered for a second time on Jan. 3 to collect signatures on a petition seeking the removal of Martinsville Mayor LC Jones. As of Tuesday, organizers estimated they had collected about 300 of the 325 signatures required.

In a Jan. 3 video on social media, Jones called for residents to push for the release of a recently completed forensic audit, praised the city's efforts in 2025, and said that he would continue to keep citizens updated in 2026.

"With everything going on. One thing I would like to talk about is how the citizens, nonprofit, and some for-profit organizations have stepped up to carry this city and keep this city in good graces and do so much for those who couldn't do for themselves," he said.

Jones said the forensic audit has been completed and would be presented to the council on January 8 during a special-called closed session meeting.

"We need to send this audit to the state police and to the special

prosecutor because those are the experts. The state police and the special prosecutor are the experts in crime and in crimes. So why wouldn't we send it to them," said Jones. "I'm asking for all citizens to reach out to your city council members, your city manager, email, telephone, in person, and say, 'hey, this audit, this will finally get us past all the negativity we've dealt with in 2025.'"

He added that the attorneys hired by the city aren't criminal attorneys.

Jones said it's time to stop paying for the legal fees and that the city only started its budget year at the end of June, but has already exhausted its \$250,000 attorney budget for the year. "We've already exhausted that. We're crossing half a million dollars," he said. "Now, by the end of this year, it would be \$1.5 million if we continue with this rate."

"Let's hold each other accountable. Not one individual that we want to point out, but let's hold us all accountable and let's raise the bar," he said.

Sports Complex draws 100,000 visitors in 2025



The Monogram Foods Smith River Sports Complex

continued to solidify its reputation as one of the premier multi-sport destinations on the East Coast in 2025,

hosting a range of athletic competitions, community gatherings, and special events that brought an estimated 100,000 visitors to Henry County

throughout the year.

During 2025, the complex accommodated 13 different sports,

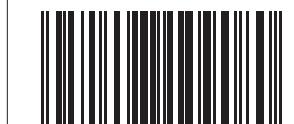
including soccer, football, ultimate frisbee, golf, lacrosse, cross-country, kayaking and canoeing, t-ball, running, flag football, whiffleball, cornhole, and cycling. In total, approximately 356 teams traveled to the facility to compete or

participate in events.

The complex was active 281 days of the year, representing 77

(See Sports p. 2)

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UPDATES



Kayla Martin and Brittany Havens shop for supplies for families served by Moms Helping Hands of Southwest Virginia.

By Jessica Dillon

Moms Helping Hands of Southwest Virginia is a new organization that stepped in during the holiday season to help mothers in need with food, gifts, and essential items such as diapers.

The group is led by Kayla Martin, who, along with Christina Kinzer, launched the effort after seeing a need in the commu-

nity.

"My friend Chrissy (Christina Kinzer) and I decided we wanted to do something for moms who needed help," Martin said.

The organization began just before Thanksgiving, when the two created a sign-up sheet for families needing assistance during the holiday season.

"We kind of dug in

and decided we wanted to turn this into a nonprofit organization as we finished Christmas and our first project," Martin said.

"It was very overwhelming at first, but it was very touching," Martin said.

When it comes to unexpected pregnancy, Martin said more education is needed.

(See Mother p. 2)

Beginning this week, the *Henry County Enterprise* will be published on Thursdays.

The deadline for submitting content is now 11 a.m. on Tuesdays. Submissions received after the deadline may be held for a future edition.

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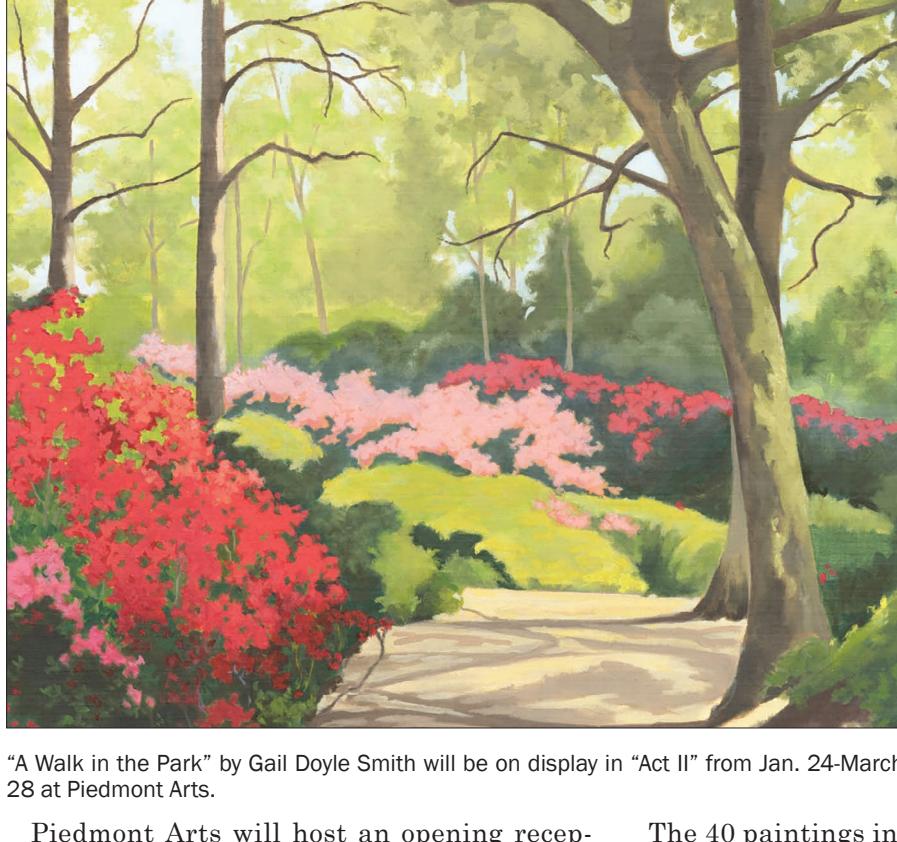
Enterprise moves to Thursday publication

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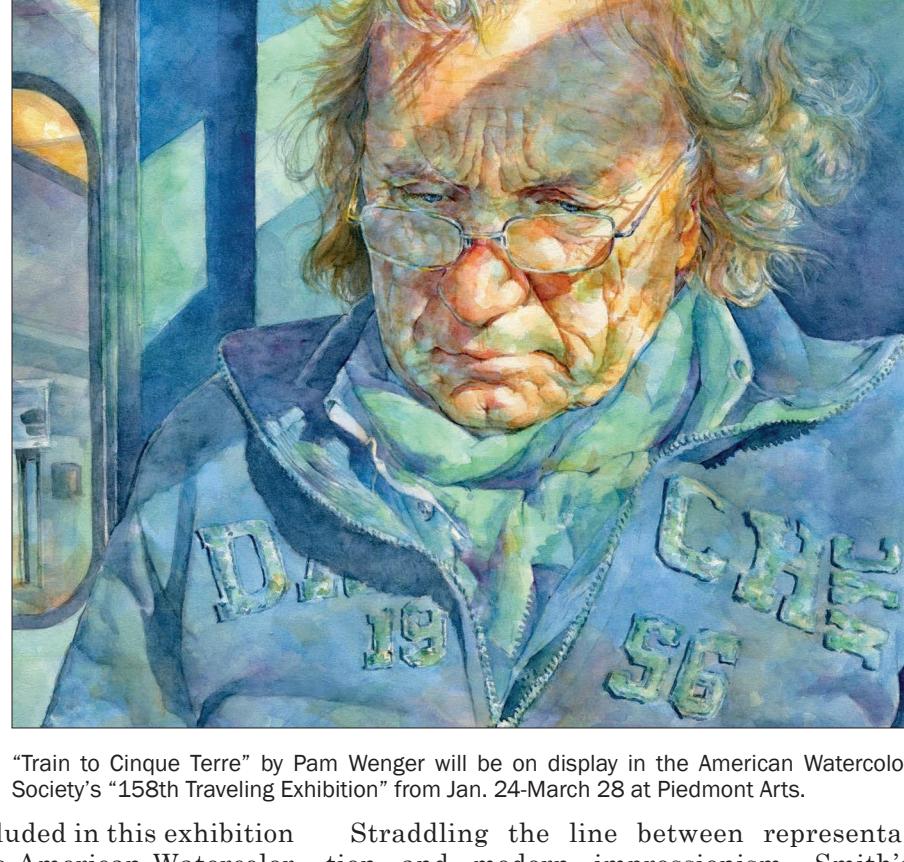
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American Watercolor Society traveling exhibition opens Jan. 23 at Piedmont Arts



"A Walk in the Park" by Gail Doyle Smith will be on display in "Act II" from Jan. 24-March 28 at Piedmont Arts.



"Train to Cinque Terre" by Pam Wenger will be on display in the American Watercolor Society's "158th Traveling Exhibition" from Jan. 24-March 28 at Piedmont Arts.

Piedmont Arts will host an opening reception in honor of its new exhibits from 5:30-7:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 23, at the museum. The American Watercolor Society's "158th Traveling Exhibition," "Act II: Paintings by Gail Doyle Smith," and "Opening Minds Through Art: Work by King's Grant Residents" will be on display.

The reception will feature live music by Ann Nichols. Complimentary refreshments will be served. A gallery talk with American Watercolor Society member artists Kevin Deck of Roanoke and David L. Stickel of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, as well as Gail Doyle Smith, will begin at 6:15 p.m. in the galleries. This event is free and open to the public. An RSVP is required by Wednesday, Jan. 21, to 276.632.3221 or at PiedmontArts.org.

The American Watercolor Society's "158th Traveling Exhibition" presents a carefully curated selection of works by many of the nation's most accomplished watercolor artists. The exhibition underscores the breadth, complexity, and expressive potential of watercolor as a medium. Spanning luminous landscapes, evocative portraiture, and dynamic abstract compositions, the works on view demonstrate both technical mastery and conceptual innovation, reflecting the continued vitality of contemporary watercolor practice.

The 40 paintings included in this exhibition were selected from the American Watercolor Society's "International Exhibition," held annually at the Salmagundi Club in New York City. Each year, more than 1,100 artists from across the United States and 32 foreign countries submit work for consideration. From this highly competitive field, only 40 works are chosen to tour nationally, offering audiences a rare opportunity to engage with outstanding examples of current watercolor painting.

Founded in 1866, the American Watercolor Society is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to the advancement of watercolor painting in the United States. Membership is conferred through a rigorous jury process and is widely regarded as a mark of artistic distinction and mastery of the medium. The Society's distinguished history includes such influential members as Andrew Wyeth, Edward Hopper, and Winslow Homer.

"Act II" features paintings by Gail Doyle Smith, a Martinsville native who now lives in coastal North Carolina. Living on the Brunswick River has provided her with an enduring source of inspiration for paintings that depict tranquil coastal landscapes, shore birds, wildlife, and native flora with sensitivity and depth.

Straddling the line between representation and modern impressionism, Smith's bold, painterly style has evolved through more than 17 years of focused study and experimentation in oils. She paints subjects she loves, approaching color with curiosity and a spirit of exploration that brings vitality and warmth to her compositions.

"Opening Minds Through Art: Work by King's Grant Residents" will be on display in the Lynwood Artists Gallery. King's Grant is an independent living facility in Martinsville. As part of Sunnyside Communities, King's Grant is committed to continuing care and provides residents with ways to passionately pursue healthy and vibrant lifestyles through a holistic approach to care and vitality.

These exhibits will be on display Jan. 24-March 28. Exhibit admission is always free.

The exhibits and reception are sponsored by Olivia and Pres Garrett, Gale and Will Gravely, Charisse and David Hairston, Kathy and Hank Long, Nancy and Henry Moore, Brenda and Joe Williams, Helen S. and Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust, Lynwood Artists, Sovah Health, and What's Your Sign.

For more information on exhibits and events, visit PiedmontArts.org.

Mother

(cont. from page 1)

"I don't think there's enough education about it, or what it takes to have a child and raise a child," she said.

Martin, a former teen mother, said she relied on programs such as Angel Tree and school support for supplies, shoes, and coats. Her two oldest daughters are now grown, and she also has a 2-year-old child.

"I was 17 when I had her, and 18 with your second," she said. "It was not the easiest. Neither of their dads was involved."

She said her oldest child's father eventually stepped in, and her own father also provided support.

"I had to learn to put my big girl pants on and deal with it. I worked my butt off to make something of myself," Martin said.

Reflecting on her children's accomplishments, Martin said one daughter has joined the older workforce and another earned scholarships to attend Radford University.

"It was a cycle between trying to get help from social services and trying to get help," she said. "When you get ahead a little bit, they take benefits away from you, and it sets you back."

Martin said those experiences motivate her to continue helping other mothers.

"It has really touched me. I want to help more than at Christmas time, throughout the year," she said.

She noted that necessities such as diapers and groceries can be difficult for families to afford.

"For a small pack, it's anywhere from \$15, and a big box can be \$50," she said. "It can last anywhere from a few days to two weeks."

"There are services you can get — Medicaid helps with insurance, and EBT can help with food," she said. "I think that is a big thing in the area that moms struggle with."

Martin said she hopes to expand the organization's reach in the future.

"I would definitely like to help more families for Christmas and be able to help each family more than we were able to this year," she said. "I would love to be able to help families throughout the year

with diapers. That was one of my biggest struggles as a teenager."

"We would absolutely love to hear from mothers," she said.

Sports

(cont. from page 1)



percent annual utilization, and hosted events on 48 weekends, or 92 percent of all weekends. Notably, nearly 75 percent of off-days occurred during December and January, highlighting the facility's near year-round impact during peak tourism seasons.

Visitors traveled an estimated 54,682 cumulative miles to attend events at the complex, with an average trip distance of 154 miles. Total travel time amounted to 931 hours and 49 minutes, with visitors spending an average of 2 hours and 37 minutes traveling to Henry County. Attendees represented 19 states and the District of Columbia, as well as 10 different countries, underscoring the complex's growing national and international reach.

"This facility has truly become a gateway for people to experience Henry County," said Roger Adams, Director of Parks & Recreation. "Every tournament, every event, and every visitor represents an opportunity to showcase our community, support local businesses, and demonstrate why Henry County is becoming a destination for recreation and outdoor experiences."

The success of the sports complex aligns with broader tourism and economic development initiatives focused on outdoor recreation, active lifestyles, and place-based investment. Located along the Smith River and connected to a growing network of trails and park amenities, the complex serves as a cornerstone of Henry County's strategy to attract visitors while enhancing quality of life for residents.

"As we continue to invest in trails, river access, and recreational infrastructure, the Monogram Foods Smith River Sports Complex stands as a perfect example of how recreation drives tourism, economic activity, and community pride," Adams added.

The success of the Monogram Foods Smith River Sports Complex in 2025 highlights the role recreation plays in strengthening both the local economy and quality of life in Henry County. By attracting visitors while also serving as a gathering place for community events and everyday recreation, the complex continues to support a balanced approach to tourism that benefits residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

(Event information/calendar items must be received by 11 a.m. on Tuesday before the desired publication date. Email to dhall@theenterprise.net.)

Events

Friday, January 9

Reception for opening of two new exhibits at the MHC Heritage Museum: "From Still to Speed: A History of NASCAR" and "A History of Setting Style," 5:30-7:30 p.m., 1 E. Main St., Martinsville. Admission is free to members, and regular admission charges apply for non-members. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Monday, January 12

Bassett Farmers Market Reopening, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., 168 Reed Stone St., Bassett.

Saturday, January 17

Author Sonya Womack-Miranda will visit Magnolia & Main Books, 810 Main Street, Ridgeway, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. She is the author of "Unnamed: The Search for Sarah Miller."

Tuesday, January 20

The Martinsville-Henry County Republicans will be meeting at 6:30 pm at the Henry County Administration Building, Summerlin meeting room. Anyone interested is welcome.

Friday, January 23

Exhibit Opening Reception, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Piedmont Arts, in honor of its new exhibits, "American Watercolor Society 158th Traveling Exhibition," "Act II: Paintings by Gail Doyle Smith," and "Work by King's Grant Residents." A gallery talk will be held at 6:15 p.m. Complimentary refreshments will be served. This event is free and open to the public.

RSVP with the number and names of those in your party by Wednesday, Jan. 21, by calling 276-632-3221 or online at PiedmontArts.org.

Saturday, January 24

9th House Grand Opening, 11 a.m., 15E Church St., Martinsville.

Monday, January 26

All Vets, Nonprofit Presents Veteran & Family Discussion Forum, 6 to 7:30 p.m., Martinsville-Henry County YMCA, 3 Starling Ave. Martinsville. Join for a meaningful discussion focused on strengthening communication and understanding the experiences of our veterans.

Ongoing

Piedmont Arts' Food Drive for Grace Network Food Pantry. Donations of nonperishable food and hygiene products may be dropped off at Piedmont Arts during regular business hours — Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. For more information, visit PiedmontArts.org.

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.

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, 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 FIELDAL 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 mhcdcva.org/meeting-rsvp for Zoom link.

Henry, Patrick, and Martinsville among localities to receive Growth and Opportunity grants

Last week, Gov. Glenn Youngkin announced \$6.2 million in Growth and Opportunity for Virginia (GO Virginia) grants for 10 projects that advance Virginia's economic competitiveness through innovation, workforce development, and strategic industry growth. The awarded projects will leverage an additional \$4 million in investment.

Both Patrick and Henry counties, and the City of Martinsville, were among the localities to receive grants.

Regions 3 (Lead) and 2, which includes the counties of Franklin, Botetourt, Montgomery, Henry, and Pittsylvania and the cities of Martinsville and Danville, will receive a \$250,000 Planning, Feasibility, and Small-Scale Pilot Grant for Blue Ridge Innovation Corridor Vision 2050.

The Blue Ridge Innovation Corridor Vision 2050 project will develop a regional strategy to guide long-term economic growth across Regions 2 and 3. Led by Region 3, the study will produce strategic recommendations across seven focus areas, including advanced manufacturing, life sciences and biotechnology, IT and emerging technology, infrastructure investment priorities, a funding roadmap and a governance model to support implementation. Vision 2050 is intended to position the corridor for coordinated investment, competitiveness, and cluster scale-up over the next 25 years.

Region 3, which includes the counties of Amelia, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Halifax,

Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Patrick, Pittsylvania and Prince Edward, and the City of Danville, will receive \$1,346,786 Implementation Grant for an Industrial Skills Trades Regional Expansion.

This regional initiative expands industrial skills trades training across Southern Virginia through partnership with Danville Community College (DCC) and Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC). The project will deliver industry-aligned programs in electrical, carpentry, HVAC, plumbing, and industrial maintenance.

"GO Virginia continues to be a catalyst for innovation and opportunity across the Commonwealth," said Youngkin. "Virginia is stronger than ever, but we have to keep going. By investing \$6.2 million in these projects, we are strengthening Virginia's workforce, advancing key strategic industries, and keeping Virginia competitive for years to come."

The latest round of projects includes investments in aviation maintenance training, industrial trades expansion, talent pathways in emerging technology sectors, regional innovation ecosystems and long-term strategic planning to position regions for transformational industry opportunities.

Several projects also leverage partnerships with school divisions, community colleges, and research universities to ensure their graduates' skills align with emerging industry needs and

Virginians can access high-quality pathways to higher-wage careers.

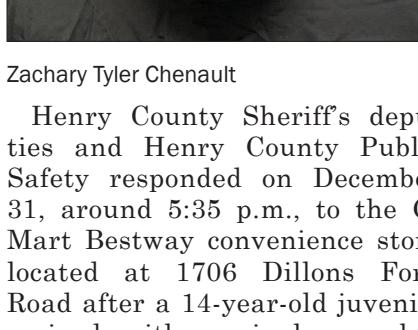
"Across the Commonwealth, we see alignment in support of stronger talent pipelines, commercialization activity, and the development of competitive sites," said Emily O'Quinn, Chair of the GO Virginia State Board. "This kind of regional collaboration is the key to new jobs and more economic opportunities."

Since 2022, GO Virginia has played a pivotal role in creating 1,100 new businesses, expanding another 1,100 businesses, and generating 25,000 jobs by fos-

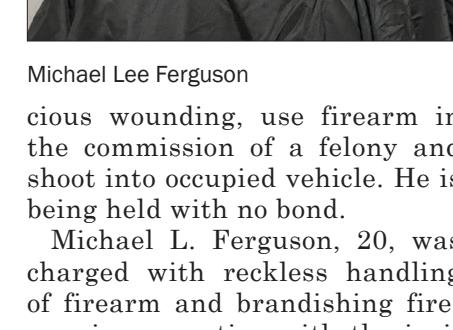
tering innovation, workforce development, and industry growth across 131 localities across the Commonwealth. GO Virginia has supported 147 projects, awarding \$72 million in state funding and leveraging \$61 million in matching non-state investments. In addition to creating new jobs and businesses, these investments have retained 12,500 jobs and launched 125 new programs that have trained 45,000 Virginians.

To learn more about how GO Virginia continues to fuel economic progress across the Commonwealth, visit dhcd.virginia.gov/gova.

New Year's Eve shooting leaves juvenile injured



Zachary Tyler Chenault



Michael Lee Ferguson

Henry County Sheriff's deputies and Henry County Public Safety responded on December 31, around 5:35 p.m., to the C-Mart Bestway convenience store located at 1706 Dillons Fork Road after a 14-year-old juvenile arrived with a single gunshot wound.

The initial investigation determined that the shooting did not occur at the convenience store. Investigators later determined the incident occurred approximately one and a half miles away at the 1700 block of The Great Road.

The juvenile victim was transported from the scene and airlifted to a trauma center for further medical treatment. Currently, the victim's condition is unknown.

Investigators have conducted multiple interviews and processed the scene and collected evidence. As a result of the investigation, two individuals were charged in connection with the incident.

Zachary T. Chenault, 22, was charged with aggravated malig-

cious wounding, use firearm in the commission of a felony and shoot into occupied vehicle. He is being held with no bond.

Michael L. Ferguson, 20, was charged with reckless handling of firearm and brandishing firearm in connection with the incident. Ferguson's bond was set at \$5,000 unsecured.

"This is a deeply concerning incident involving a juvenile, and our investigators are working diligently to hold those responsible accountable," said Sheriff Wayne Davis. "We will not tolerate acts of violence in our community, and we are committed to pursuing justice while ensuring the safety of our citizens."

The investigation remains active and ongoing. Anyone with information related to this incident is encouraged to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office or Crime Stoppers. Information may be provided anonymously by calling Crime Stoppers at 63 CRIME or submitting tips online. Tips that lead to an arrest may be eligible for a cash reward.

Fake Jobs, Real Losses

If your New Year's resolutions include finding a new job, work-from-home opportunities may sound appealing. While many remote positions are legitimate, some aren't what they appear to be. Criminals often pose as legitimate employers on job boards, social media, or send unsolicited texts, promising easy money, flexible hours, and a quick hiring process.

What they're really after is personal information or our money by asking to pay upfront for "training," purchase expensive equipment, or provide sensitive details—such as your Social Security number—as

part of the application.

Be cautious of sudden, unusually high-paying opportunities that require little to no experience. Avoid sharing personal data until you're certain the job offer is legitimate and take time to research the company by searching for its name along with the words scam, complaint, or fraud. If you see concerns from other job seekers, consider it a clear red flag.

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.

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OPINION

Immigration and Inflation

Morgan
Griffith

Representative

As we near the conclusion of President Trump's first year of this term, I thought we should look at two issues he faced, immigration and inflation.

Trump acted swiftly to try to repair the damage done by the Biden-Harris Administration.

For many, the Biden-Harris era will be remembered for its failures to contain illegal immigration and tame high levels of inflation.

More than 11 million illegal aliens entered the United States thanks to Biden-Harris open borders policies!

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reports that in Fiscal Year 2023, nationwide encounters topped more than 200,000 every month.

Some months even eclipsed 300,000!

At one point, Biden and Democrats erroneously claimed they could not fix the illegal immigration problem. They argued that it was a problem for Congress to solve!

Trump proved them wrong.

Since February 2025, CBP reports significant declines in nationwide encounters. Monthly reports show that encounters dipped to an average of under 30,000 encounters nationwide!

The progress on the border has been significant!

Recent signs show that we are making some progress on inflation as well.

At one point under Biden-Harris, the infla-

tion rate hit 9.1% year-over-year. That number had not been seen in the United States in four decades!

Interestingly, the last time the yearly inflation reached that level was when a Republican president inherited a similar troubling economy from an unpopular Democratic president.

It was November 1981. President Ronald Reagan had been elected to office a year prior largely on a promise to fix the U.S. economy.

Americans were fed up with President Jimmy Carter, who is also remembered for his failure to address high inflation.

As Reagan went about his first year in office, the inflation issue did not go away. Despite passage of a major tax cuts bill in his first year, Americans were still reeling from the Carter economy.

The public was beginning to doubt Reagan's economic vision. His approval ratings were dipping.

Nonetheless, Reagan persisted with his free market reforms. After some time, Reagan's economic measures to cut taxes and regulations started to pay off!

Ironically, Trump finds himself following in Reagan's footsteps.

After nearly a year in office, a majority of Americans feel dissatisfied with the economy. Patience appears to be running thin.

Like you, I am eager to see Trump fix the Biden-Harris economy. If it could happen tomorrow, I would be ecstatic!

But as was the case with Reagan, it can take time to implement economic reforms and to see them yield results.

Recently, we received good economic news.

A report from the Consumer Price Index shows that the annual inflation rate in November slowed to 2.7%, better than what economists predicted.

While some urge caution that this number may not be wholly reflective because of the government shutdown, no one is arguing the annual inflation rate is anywhere close to

9.1% like it was under Biden-Harris.

The Federal Reserve generally regards 2% as the target annual inflation rate.

A 2% annual inflation rate helps show that the economy is healthy enough for people and businesses to spend money and make investments, driving economic growth and helping stabilize prices for consumers.

We are seeing gas prices coming down, which indicates future price drops in goods because many goods are transported by truck.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) also grew at 4.3% in the 3rd quarter of 2025.

While it is a work in progress, I believe that Trump's efforts to reverse Biden-Harris inflationary policies will yield benefits for U.S. consumers.

The reconciliation bill that I voted for, and Republicans passed, this summer should also help our economic prospects.

Just like Reagan's tax cuts bill in his first year, we delivered Trump a tax cuts package in his first year.

The bill preserves the 2017 Tax Cuts, prevents a massive tax hike on American consumers and helps deliver American communities better economic opportunities.

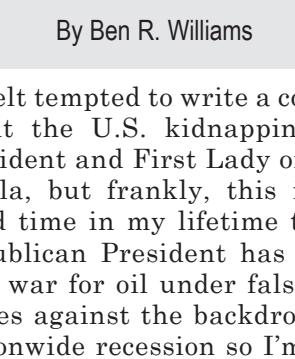
Such economic opportunities will stem from new policies that include no taxes on tips, no taxes on hourly overtime and a senior tax bonus.

While these strong provisions will support our economy, it should be noted that Democrats, who gloated about the Biden-Harris economy and dismissed the inflation issue, opposed our reconciliation bill!

Going into 2026, I will continue to support securing our borders and advocate for policies that lower taxes, promote deregulation, and in turn, tackle inflation.

As progress continues on these fronts, Republicans in Congress will continue to support Trump's efforts to clean up Biden's inflation mess and help steer the U.S. economy to new heights.

The USPS policy change that barely made the news



By Ben R. Williams

I felt tempted to write a column about the U.S. kidnapping the President and First Lady of Venezuela, but frankly, this is the third time in my lifetime that a Republican President has started a war for oil under false pretenses against the backdrop of a nationwide recession so I'm having a hard time getting worked up about it.

Instead, let's talk about the United States Postal Service (USPS).

A few days ago, I stumbled across an item that's gotten so little coverage that it appears the story was first broken by The Na-

tional Society of Tax Professionals, although USA Today later picked it up along with a handful of local news agencies.

As of Christmas Eve, the USPS has adopted a new rule. When you drop off a piece of mail at your local Post Office, there is no longer any guarantee that the mail will be postmarked that day. Instead, the postmark will signal the "date of the first automated processing operation" at a processing facility, which could be a few days later.

If you want to make sure that your mail is postmarked on the day you dropped it off, you can request a manual postmark at the counter, ask for a Postal Validation Imprint (PVI), or purchase a Certificate of Mailing (or use Registered Mail or Certified Mail).

It's fortunate that those options are available. However, I'm willing to bet that the vast majority of people will have no idea that USPS even made this policy change, much less that they can request a manual postmark. This story has not gotten a ton of traction, probably because it's substantially less insane than everything else in the

news right now.

Given this change, it's easy to see why The National Society of Tax Professionals were among the first to report on this story. How many of us wait until the last possible moment to file our taxes? I know I've done it. Now if you drop your tax documents in the mail on April 15, there's a decent chance that the IRS will consider it a late filing, which can result in financial penalties.

But of course, taxes are just the tip of the iceberg. Do you need to wait until the last minute to pay your rent or your mortgage or any other bills in order to make sure you have money in your checking account? Too bad! You might be getting hit with some late payment fees.

Like most U.S. policy changes, this will predominantly hurt poor people and elderly people. If you're barely making ends meet, you're far more likely to wait until the last minute to pay your bills. If you're elderly, there's a higher chance that you pay your bills by mailing a check instead of paying online.

So why did USPS make this change? Allegedly, the purpose is to cut costs and streamline mail processing.

I think it's more malicious than that, and I believe this change was designed to do two things.

First off, it's designed to invalidate mail-in ballots. What percentage of absentee ballots are dropped off at the post office on the day of the election? I have no idea, but I imagine that it's a large enough percentage that it could potentially skew election results, or at least leave a foothold for an argument that a large percentage of absentee ballots are invalid.

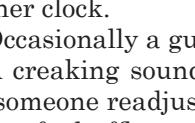
The other goal is to erode faith in the USPS and push people toward using corporate shipping companies like UPS and FedEx in our nation's ongoing attempt to privatize all government services.

If that seems outlandish, consider that the current United States Postmaster General David P. Steiner —handpicked by President Donald Trump just last year — served on the FedEx Board of Directors since 2009 and served as FedEx's lead independent director since 2013.

As always, if you want to figure out why a government agency has made a policy change, the safest bet is to just assume the worst motivation imaginable.

Column Sponsored by: Dr. Mensink

A house that speaks in silence

Holly
Kozelsky

The house should be silent, but it's not.

Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock goes the grandfather clock.

Occasionally a gust of wind blows by outside.

A creaking sound comes from the easy chair as someone readjusts.

A soft shuffle comes from the turn of a page.

The silence, with its slight noises we normally do not notice, is lulling and embracing.

Love and companionship fill the room, as all

sit and read.

We read for hours. Occasionally one gets up for a stretch, a glass of water, a cup of tea.

Some read traditional books. Some read on the Kindle or Nook.

This companionable reading can only come toward the end of the family visits. The beginnings are full of conversations, laughter, perhaps bickering and tears. They are full of plans and events and outings and errands and meals and preparations and clean-ups.

Only after all that has past and everything slows down do the good reading days come.

The silence transcends time. Noises and voices and shows and music proclaim their epoch, but the silence is timeless.

When we all read a book in the silence of the same room, it sounds exactly the same as it did decades ago, and it will years into the future, and so we are most like ourselves, unsullied and uninterrupted by the outside.

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The Henry County Enterprise encourages letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns.

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If you have news about or an upcoming event for your organization, company or church, email dhall@theenterprise.net.

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More than 350,000 Virginians are set to lose health insurance due to the end of tax credits. (Wikimedia Commons)

Premiums set to go up for thousands of Virginians

By Zamone Perez

Virginia News Connection

Republicans in Congress did not vote on an extension of Affordable Care Act tax credits before the new year began. Now, premiums on the marketplace are set to rise significantly.

Nearly 400,000 Virginians will pay see their yearly premiums increase by an average of over \$700, and another 350,000 people are set to lose their health insurance entirely, according to Protect Our Care.

A vote on an extension of the tax credits may still be on the table for later this month, as Democrats and a couple Republicans signed a discharge petition to force a vote on extending the credits.

Beth O'Connor, executive director of the Virginia Rural Health Association, said the subsidies allowed people to access health insurance when they otherwise wouldn't have been able to.

"So, the tax credits essentially have allowed people who don't have employer-subsidized health insurance," said O'Connor, "to be able to get health insurance for themselves and their families at a rate that they can afford."

While Democrats are largely in favor of an extension, Republicans in Washington are deeply divided on the issue, with House Speaker Mike Johnson cancelling a vote in December.

Moderates wanted a short extension, while more conservative Republicans demand spending concessions if an extension is passed.

A rise in health insurance premiums and a flood of people losing their health insurance spells trouble for hospitals, especially in rural communities. O'Connor said rural hospitals and emergency rooms could be some of the hardest hit by a surge of people becoming uninsured.

"It makes it harder for hospitals, especially for rural hospitals who have a high percentage of people who don't have insurance, to be able to pay their bills and keep their doors open," said O'Connor. "If a higher percentage of the population doesn't have insurance, that means those people are likely to wait until a problem is very bad to see the doctor."

According to Protect Our Care, the loss of ACA tax credits will also cause Virginia hospitals to lose \$92 million in funding.

Community Chronicles



A UFO terrorizes 1950s Martinsville in this digitally created photo. (Photo by Andy Doss)

By Jarred Marlowe

For more than a quarter century, residents of Martinsville and the surrounding Henry County countryside repeatedly found themselves glancing skyward with curiosity, skepticism, and sometimes unease. From the late 1940s through the early 1970s, local newspapers such as the Daily Bulletin and the Journal recorded a steady stream of unexplained sightings. Together, these accounts offer a revealing glimpse into how a small community experienced the national fascination with flying saucers and unidentified objects in the sky.

The first major wave of reports arrived during the summer of 1947, when interest in mysterious aerial phenomena was sweeping the country. One of the most striking local stories came from Figsboro, where Mrs. Ben Pinkard claimed she had counted 352 shapeless objects pass-

ing over her home during a single night. Her son Jimmie reportedly timed their movement and concluded that ten objects crossed the sky each minute. While a reporter jokingly suggested they might be cups to match the saucers, the Pinkard family stood firmly by what they had seen. That same evening, hosiery mill workers in Fieldale described glowing disks with prismatic colors moving overhead.

As the years passed, sightings continued and shifted locations. In March of 1950, L. S. Gibbs, an insurance adjuster traveling between Danville and Lynchburg, reported seeing a flying disc streak rapidly across the horizon. Gibbs was confident the object was neither an airplane nor a jet, adding to the growing sense that something unusual was occurring above Southside Virginia.

By October 1952, the phenomenon had become communal. Groups

OBITUARIES

Mary "Bitsy" Fulcher Morgan



Mary "Bitsy" Fulcher Morgan was born January 9, 1945, in Critz, VA. Her father, John Fulcher, was Secretary-Treasurer at Hooker Furniture Corporation. Her mother, Louise, was a music and kindergarten teacher. In 1950, the Fulchers moved to Martinsville. In 1951, Bitsy's brother John, Jr. was born.

Gifted academically and musically, Bitsy began studying piano with Miss Elizabeth Davis, and later with Miss Ruth Pace. Bitsy was in the "top ten" scholars in her Martinsville High School Class of 1963. She was a loyal member of the high school band, and performed as a majorette during marching season. Bitsy was baptized at the former First Baptist Church downtown, where she was active in the music ministry.

Upon graduation, Bitsy entered Salem College in Winston-Salem, NC, graduating in 1967 with a BA in Music. In the 1960's, she met Fred, a native of Fort Myers, FL, and a student at Wake Forest University. The two began dating, fell in love, and were married at First Baptist Martinsville in 1968.

Fred and Bitsy spent time in Richmond, VA and Athens, GA before moving to Columbia, SC, where their three daughters were born. In 1981 the family moved to Asheville, NC, where Bitsy and Fred would remain for the next 40 years. Once in Asheville, Bitsy began working as a Director of Music, serving several local United Methodist Churches, including Trinity, Weaver-

ville, and Skyland.

Most were combination positions with education, where she led youth groups, children's choirs, handbell choirs, Bible school, and jumped in to fill any role needed. Her strong faith was a guiding force in her life. In later years, the couple joined Central United Methodist Church.

Beyond her musical gifts, Bitsy had a wealth of other talents. Her children remember a home filled with music, love, homemade meals, cakes, and sourdough bread, handmade costumes, flowers and tomatoes from the garden, and wonderful decorations to make every holiday a special memory.

Always prioritizing family, she continued many of her parent's traditions, which her children carry on with their own families today. Bitsy was a force of nature. She loved fully and put her heart into everything she did.

In 1996, Bitsy's health began to decline after a stroke, but with pure determination and courage, she overcame many challenges. Then, in 2014, she suffered another life-changing health crisis. She spent the next several years in a long-term care facility due to her substantial needs. Bitsy and Fred had envi-

of residents gathered outdoors on Dye Plant Road and Moss Street to watch a silver-colored object move slowly across the sky. Witnesses said it appeared to be a long streak with a tail and remained visible for as long as thirty minutes. Some observers were convinced they were seeing a flying saucer, while others struggled to describe what they could plainly see but not explain.

As reports increased, so did attempts to explain them. In July 1957, W. P. Taylor of Henry Street offered a practical theory. He suggested that many sightings were caused by automobile headlights reflecting off the slanted windshields of oncoming cars, producing beams of light that could be seen for miles. Despite this explanation, new reports continued to surface.

Even official skepticism failed to quiet local interest. In November nineteen 1957, the United States Air Force announced that after investigating thousands of sightings over a ten-year period, it had found no evidence of extraterrestrial craft. Ironically, on the same night that statement appeared in print, young people in Bassett reported a rosy, pink light hovering near their car on Ridgewood Road. They insisted it was not a prank or trick of the imagination.

As the nation entered the space age, explanations increasingly turned toward science. In January

1965, a local reporter admitted that a bright object he initially labeled a flying saucer may have been a meteor. Still, he noted a strange coincidence when electrical power flickered off in his neighborhood at the exact moment of the sighting.

By October 1973, the language had changed. Flying saucers were now more commonly called UFOs. A Collinsville family reported seeing a bluish light near Route 220 that appeared motionless and lacked any clear shape. They considered weather balloons and unusual atmospheric conditions but ultimately could not reach a conclusion.

Taken together, these stories form more than a collection of odd reports. They document a community wrestling with the unknown and reflect a time when the mysteries of the sky captured the imagination of everyday people. Whether reflections, meteors, secret tests, or something never fully understood, the Martinsville sightings remain an enduring chapter of local history.

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

Submit your community news and photos to dhall@theenterprise.net and be sure to like the Henry County Enterprise on Facebook.

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FOR READINGPre-apply now for the Specialty
Crop Block Grant Program

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) is currently accepting pre-applications for the 2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant program. The United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA AMS) provides VDACS with Specialty Crop Block Grant funding to increase the competitiveness of Virginia specialty crops in the marketplace.

Pre-applications are due by 5 p.m. on

Feb. 6, and should be submitted using the agency's online portal, which is available at www.vdacs.virginia.gov/sales-specialty-crop-competitive-grant-program.shtml. Applications received after 5 p.m. on Feb. 6 will not be considered. Project leaders will receive notification by Feb. 23, as to if their project is selected to develop a full proposal. Full proposals will be due on March 13.

The program grant period is expected to begin on Oct. 1, and the duration of each grant is up to two years. This program is contingent upon the availability of federal funding.

A virtual information session will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 13, at 10 a.m., to detail the 2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program round of funding and application process. Please visit www.vdacs.virginia.gov/sales-specialty-crop-competitive-grant-program.shtml for the virtual information session link and additional information including previous year's guidelines, instructions, and application.

VDACS will accept pre-applications of

such systems, including USDA GroupGAP, for small farmers, packers, and processors.

- Invest in specialty crop research, including research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes.
- Develop new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops.
- Improve pest and disease control.
- Increase child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops.

Specialty crop competitive grant proposals must be specific and explain how an association, industry group or organization will use the funds to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

- Improve efficiency and reduce costs of distribution systems.
- Enhance sustainability.

Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops to include floriculture. Visit www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbg/specialty-crop for more information on eligible and ineligible crops.

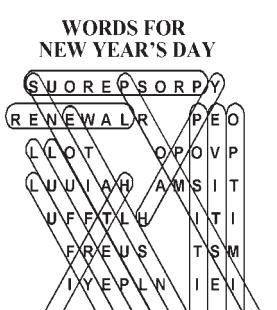
Questions regarding the pre-application process should be directed to Janelle Otieno at janelle.otieno@vdacs.virginia.gov or Melissa Ball at melissa.ball@vdacs.virginia.gov.

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Puzzle Answers!

SNOWFLAKES

solution



SCRAMBLERS

solution

1. Ambush; 2. Breach;

3. Gambit; 4. Inched

Today's Word

WATCHING



FEAR KNOT

answer



ODIUM

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UNWISE

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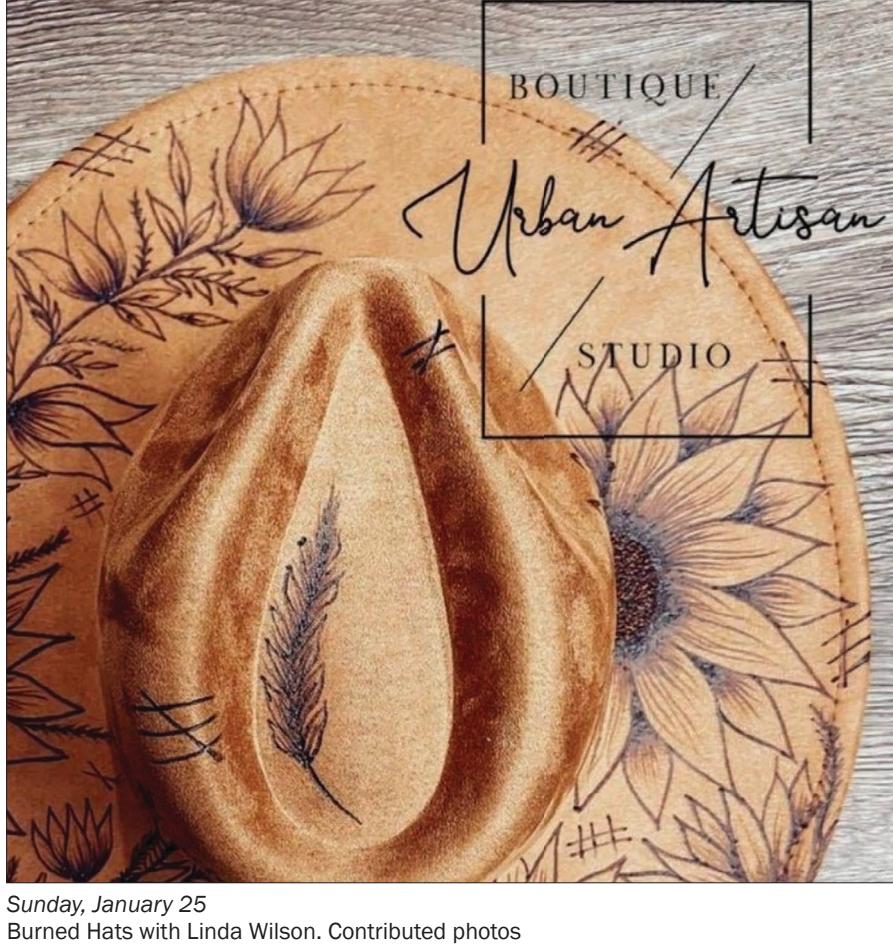
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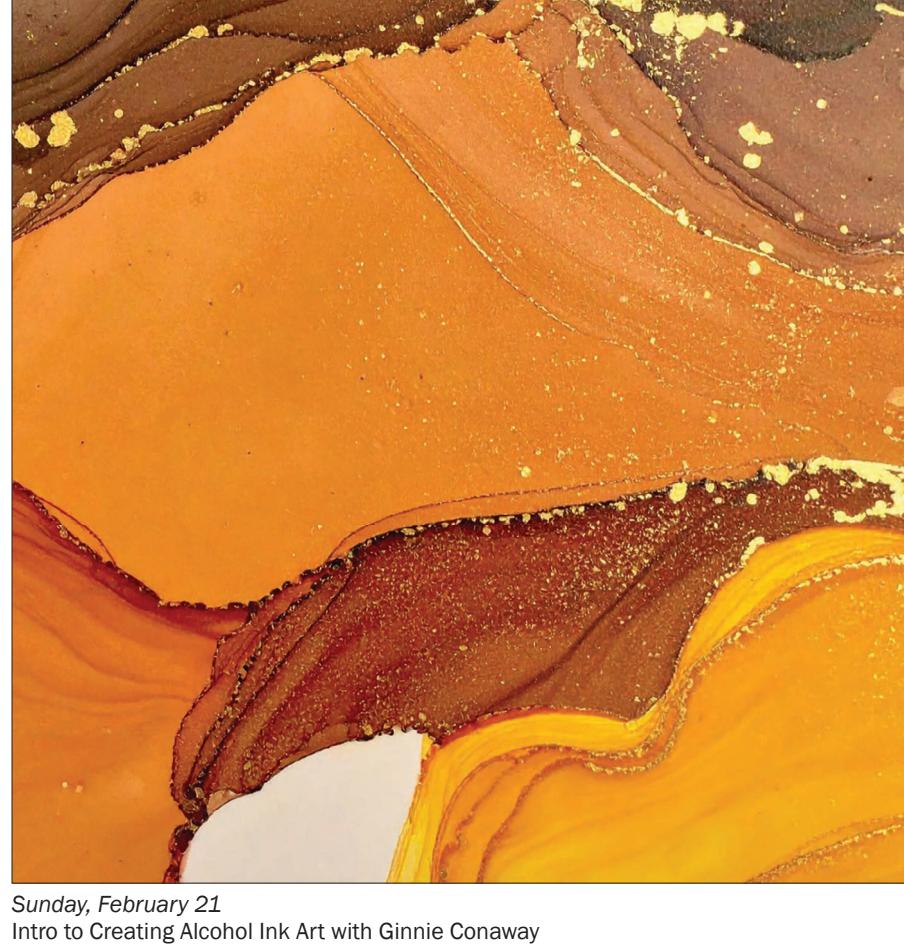
ODIUM

OW

Homestead Happenings



Sunday, January 25
Burned Hats with Linda Wilson. Contributed photos



Sunday, February 21
Intro to Creating Alcohol Ink Art with Ginnie Conaway



Sunday, March 21
Beginner's Pen and Ink Drawing with Karen Sigmon



Sunday, April 19
Turkey Wing Whisk Broom and Cake Tester Making with Erin Simons

Beginning in February, the Reynolds Homestead will begin to collect input for the upcoming strategic plan development, which will guide operations at the center over the next decade. Input from patrons, residents, and the public will be collected through online surveys, community listening sessions,

focus groups, and personal interviews. Opportunities to participate will be shared on social media as well as in newsletters and on the website.

Homestead Artisan Series January

This month, a new Homestead Artisan Se-

ries kicks off, with a curated selection of traditional artisans who will share their crafts in a series of beginner-friendly, accessible workshops. Sign up at bit.ly/homesteadartisan. Find class descriptions and more details at reynoldshomestead.vt.edu/upcoming-events/ArtOfferings.

Read Local
Keep up with your community!



Cash receipt data shows Virginia's top ag products for 2024

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service has released cash receipt data for calendar year 2024. This data is a primary tool for identifying which agricultural products are driving economic trends and production value in the Commonwealth. Total cash receipts for Virginia agricultural commodities in 2024 were \$4,552,075,000, which includes \$2,983,928,000 in animals and animal products, and \$1,568,147,000 in crops.

"Agriculture continues to be a strong economic driver for the Commonwealth, thanks to the hard work and dedication of Virginia farmers," said Joseph Guthrie, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. "The variety of commodities in which the Commonwealth ranks nationally demonstrates the breadth of Virginia's agricultural diversity."

Virginia's top seven commodities for 2024 as determined by cash receipts are broilers (chicken for meat); cattle and calves; miscellaneous crops (includes most Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA), nurseries, tomatoes, and potatoes, among others); dairy products – milk; soybeans; turkeys; and corn. When ranking states by commodity cash receipts, Virginia is third nationally in tobacco

1	Broilers	\$1,254,235,000
2	Cattle and calves	\$712,985,000
3	Miscellaneous crops	\$483,285,000
4	Dairy products, Milk	\$363,132,000
5	Soybeans	\$260,192,000
6	Turkeys	\$241,191,000
7	Corn	\$227,193,000
8	All other animals and products	\$222,960,000
9	Hay	\$160,627,000
10	Chicken eggs	\$146,011,000
11	Floriculture	\$132,911,000
12	Cotton lint, Upland	\$67,703,000
13	Apples	\$64,042,000
14	Tobacco	\$63,119,000
15	Wheat	\$42,264,000
16	Hogs	\$39,749,000
17	Peanuts	\$37,408,000
18	Pumpkins	\$14,681,000
19	Cottonseed	\$12,440,000
20	Trout	\$2,637,000

co; fifth in apples; sixth in turkeys; eighth in peanuts; ninth in trout; and tenth in pumpkins and other animals and products.

Virginia's Top 20 Agricultural Commodities for Calendar Year 2024. Ranked by cash receipt value rounded to the nearest thousand.

Thank you for reading the Henry County Enterprise



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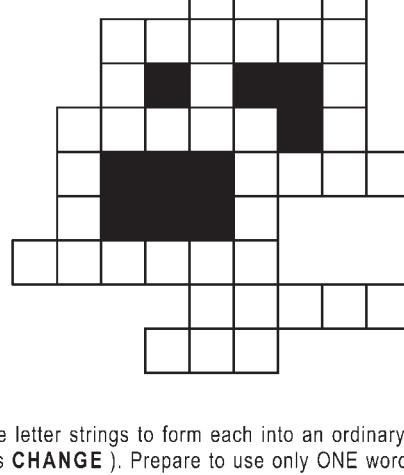
PUZZLE TIME

FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ... OR DARE!

OBO
WENIUS
DUMIO
RTWI
DEMPIE
♥ EWO
♥ NCIO
♥ WEDNO
WOS
ENRAMB
TACIO
WMNO



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.



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3. Char is different. 4. Plant is taller. 5. Briefcase handle is

misshapen. 6. Thumb is moved.

7. Band around hat is wider. 8. Briefcase handle is

different.

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misshapen. 122. Band around hat is wider. 123. Briefcase handle is

different.

FAMILY EXPANSION

BY LUCIE WINBORNE

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

• Belize wins the prize for having the national flag with the most colors — 12.

• A California man discovered that he'd been paying his neighbor's power bill for an astonishing 15 years because his meter was mapped to the wrong apartment.

• Labatt Park in London, Ontario, dating back to 1877, is the oldest continually operating baseball grounds in the world.

• A Japanese man who didn't speak to his wife for 20 years while they still lived together and raised three children admitted his silence was due to jealousy of the attention she paid to their kids. Fortunately, the couple finally reconciled after said kids sought help from a TV show.

• Marie Curie was the first person ever to win two Nobel Prizes, one for physics and the other for chemistry, in honor of her work on radioactivity.

• Hawaiian pizza was invented by a Greek immigrant inspired by the sweet and savory flavors of Chinese cuisine.

• Atoms are nearly 100% empty space.

• Cotard's Syndrome, aka Walking Corpse Syndrome, causes sufferers to believe they are dead or missing body parts.

• Ancient Egyptians pronounced the word "cat" as "mew" or "meow."

• A 2001 study conducted at the University of Leicester showed that when cows listen to slow, soothing songs, they produce 3% more milk.

• Those CAPTCHA tests that verify you're human and not a robot have a dual purpose: Each time you identify a bus or traffic light or what have you, you're also helping to improve AI algorithms for companies like Google.

• There are more than 1.4 billion insects for each human on Earth.

Thought for the Day: "Human kindness has never weakened the stamina or softened the fiber of a free people. A nation does not have to be cruel to be tough." — Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

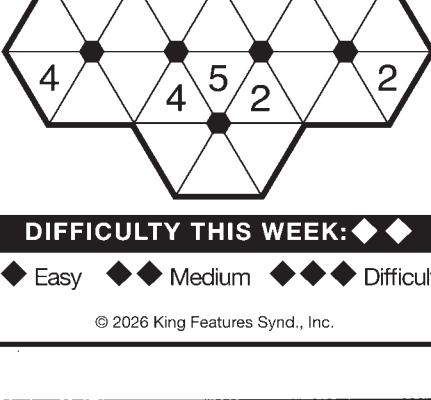
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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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.



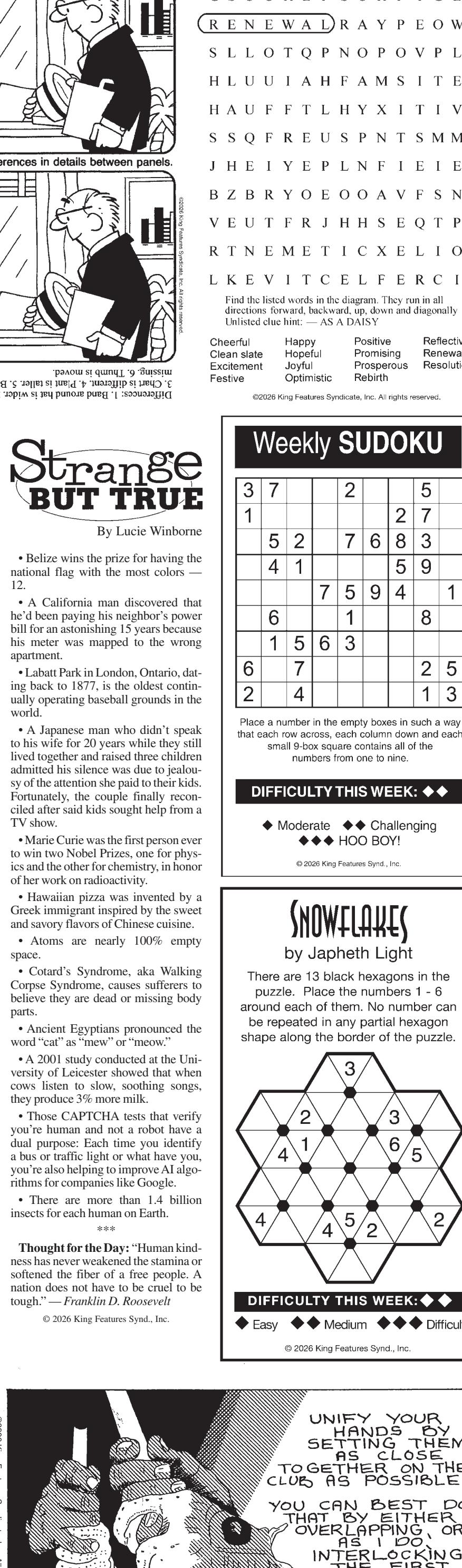
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆

◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

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SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Trap

SUMBAH

Crack

CHERAB

Plan

BIGMAT

Plot

NICHEDE

TODAY'S WORD

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"Looks to me like the birds will be doing most of the ...!"</div

SPORTS

Martinsville Marlins strong team in Race for the Golden Duck

The Martinsville Marlins traveled to Franklin County to compete in the Race for the Golden Duck On December 20, joining teams from across the PYSA League, including Franklin County, Alta Vista, Alleghany, Virginia's Blue Ridge, Southern Virginia, South Boston, and Bedford.

The Marlins were represented by 37 swimmers ranging in age from 5 to 18, all contributing to a strong team performance. The Marlins won 1st place overall for the boys' scores, 2nd place overall for the girls' scores, and 1st place overall for combined team scores.

"This was a huge win for us," said Pamela Foley. "Our team puts in a lot of work. I'm incredibly proud of them."

Brad Kinkema added, "All the swimmers have worked very hard this season, and it was great to see this hard work translate into time drops and a first place victory."

Bailey Sharp, a former Marlin and current coach, said, "It is such an honor and a blessing to witness this wonderful group of strong, competitive athletes reaching their goals together as a team. I am so proud of their dedication so far this season, and I can't wait to see what other awards and trophies they earn—most importantly, how many ducks we bring home in the final stretch of the short course season!"

The Marlins are coached this season by Kinkeema, Bailey Sharp, Foley, Sterling Anderson, Taylor Shank, and Darin Johnson.

Additionally, four Marlin swimmers have qualified for the Upper South East Regional YMCA Short Course Championship Meet, which will take place at Liberty University March 19 - 22. Congratulations to Charlotte Zagol, Lynzi Haynes, Chase Dillard, and Sarah Jane Stone.

Full results are:

Gus Arehart (5)

4th place 6 & under 25 freestyle
4th place 6 & under 25 backstroke

Jaxon Calloway (9)

2nd place 9 - 10 200 freestyle
3rd place 9 - 10 50 butterfly

Mason Calloway (13)

2nd place 13 - 14 100 butterfly
5th place 13 - 14 100 backstroke

6th place 13 - 14 100 breaststroke

Rowan Calloway (11)

1st place 12 & under 200IM
1st place 12 & under 100 butterfly
1st place 12 & under 100 breaststroke

Cadence Carroll (7)

3rd place 7 - 8 25 freestyle
3rd place 7 - 8 50 freestyle
3rd place 7 - 8 25 backstroke

Maylee Cox (7)

4th place 7 - 8 25 freestyle
4th place 7 - 8 50 freestyle
7th place 7 - 8 25 backstroke

Chase Dillard (17)

1st place 15 & over 50 freestyle
1st place 15 & over 100 butterfly

1st place 15 & over 100 freestyle

Lyndon Eggleston-Clark (14)

4th place 13 - 14 200 freestyle
2nd place 13 - 14 200IM

6th place 13 - 14 50 freestyle

Noam Fleagle (10)

11th place 9 - 10 50 freestyle
6th place 9 - 10 100 freestyle

Nathan Goad (17)

1st place 15 & over 200IM
4th place 15 & over 100 backstroke

2nd place 15 & over 100 breaststroke

Kaythan Gray (11)

6th place 11 - 12 100IM
4th place 11 - 12 50 butterfly

7th place 11 - 12 50 breaststroke

Lynzi Haynes (13)

1st place 13 - 14 200 freestyle
2nd place 13 - 14 50 freestyle

2nd place 13 - 14 100 freestyle

Nate Hoffman (7)

6th 7 - 8 25 freestyle

6th 7 - 8 50 freestyle

5th 7 - 8 25 backstroke

Christian LaPrade (9)

16th 9 - 10 50 freestyle

10th 9 - 10 50 backstroke

Sebastian LaPrade (10)

1st place 9 - 10 100IM

2nd place 9 - 10 100 freestyle

3rd place 9 - 10 50 breaststroke

Connor Lumpkins (8)

5th place 7 - 8 25 freestyle

4th place 7 - 8 25 backstroke

CJ Martin (11)

2nd place 11 - 12 50 freestyle

2nd place 11 - 12 100 freestyle

1st place 11 - 12 50 backstroke

Kole Martin (9)

1st place 9 - 10 200 freestyle

3rd place 9 - 10 100IM

1st place 9 - 10 100 freestyle

Havah Mitchell (12)

3rd 11 - 12 50 freestyle

1st 11 - 12 50 backstroke

1st 11 - 12 50 breaststroke

Calum Moore (5)

5th place 6 & under 25 freestyle

5th place 6 & under 25 backstroke

Tempest Mounce (9)

10th place 9 - 10 50 freestyle

3rd place 9 - 10 100 freestyle

5th place 9 - 10 50 backstroke

River Nester (9)

3rd place 9 - 10 100 freestyle

4th place 9 - 10 50 backstroke

4th place 9 - 10 50 breaststroke

Brandon Nunley (7)

1st place 7 - 8 25 freestyle



3rd place 7 - 8 50 freestyle

2nd place 7 - 8 25 backstroke

Lauryn Palmer (11)

6th place 11 - 12 50 freestyle

4th place 11 - 12 100 freestyle

2nd place 11 - 12 50 backstroke

Samson Ray (14)

10th place 13 - 14 50 freestyle

7th place 13 - 14 100 freestyle

Adam Salem (10)

15th place 9 - 10 50 freestyle

9th place 9 - 10 50 backstroke

5th place 9 - 10 50 breaststroke

Layla Salem (12)

7th place 11 - 12 50 freestyle

3rd place 11 - 12 50 backstroke

8th place 11 - 12 50 breaststroke

Henry Schenk (10)

3rd place 9 - 10 200 freestyle

5th place 9 - 10 100 freestyle

5th place 9 - 10 50 backstroke

Harry Slate (10)

8th 9 - 10 50 freestyle

7th 9 - 10 100 freestyle

6th 9 - 10 50 backstroke

Lyndon Slate (9)

2nd place 9 - 10 50 freestyle

3rd place 9 - 10 50 backstroke

2nd place 9 - 10 50 breaststroke

Lucas Stone (10)

12th 9 - 10 50 yard freestyle

12th 9 - 10 50 yard backstroke

Nicolette Stone (14)

3rd place 13 - 14 200IM

4th place 13 - 14 50 freestyle

4th place 13 - 14 100 breaststroke

Sarah Jane Stone (16)

1st place 15 & over 200IM

1st place 15 & over 50 freestyle

2nd place 15 & over 100 backstroke

C. Taylor (9)

17th place 9 - 10 50 freestyle

13th place 9 - 10 50 backstroke

Sophia Terrell (9)

5th place 9 - 10 100IM

7th place 9 - 10 50 freestyle

5th place 9 - 10 50 breaststroke

Kipton Viperman (10)

5th place 9 - 10 50 freestyle

7th place 9 - 10 50 breaststroke

Charlotte Zagol (17)

2nd place 15 & over 50 freestyle

1st place 15 & over 100 butterfly

3rd place 15 & over 100 backstroke

Mixed 100 Medley Relay 10 & Under - 2nd place

Cadence Carroll, River Nester, Sebastian LaPrade, and Maylee Cox

Mixed 200 Medley Relay 10 & Under - 1st place

Jaxon Calloway, Sophia Terrell, Kole Martin, and Kipton Viperman

Mixed 12 & Under 200 Freestyle Relay

Kaythan Gray, Rowan Calloway, CJ Martin, and Sebastian LaPrade - 3rd place

Brandon Nunley, Nate Hoffman, Cadence Carroll, and Christian LaPrade - 6th place

Mixed 10 & Under 200 Freestyle Relay - 1st place

Mixed 10 & Under 200 Freestyle Relay - 1st place

Jaxon Calloway, Nicolette Stone, Lyndon Eggleston-Clark, and Havah Mitchell

Mixed 200 Freestyle Relay - 1st place

Charlotte Zagol, Sarah Jane Stone, Chase Dillard, and Lynzi Haynes

way, and CJ Martin

Mixed 200 Medley Relay 14 & Under - 3rd place

LEGAL**Notice of Public Hearing**

Martinsville City Council will hold a public hearing on January 27, 2026, beginning at 7:00 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

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

LEGAL**HENRY COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE**
INTENT TO REMOVE AN UNSAFE STRUCTURE

RECORD OWNER: CORNIS EUGENE BIGGS, JR

Pursuant to Section 6-300 of the Henry County Code, NOTICE is hereby given that the owner shall remove the structure which might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of the County on or before thirty (30) days following this publication and failure to do so will result in the County having to remove the structure and the cost or expense shall be charged to an paid by the owner and collected as taxes are collected.

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION - Unsafe structure

OWNER - Landowner: CORNIS EUGENE BIGGS JR

PROPERTY LOCATION AND TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER - 959 Chestnut St. - Horsepasture District

Henry County, Virginia

Tax Map: 40.1(001)013 /016 ,

Account Number - 230960000

County of Henry
Charles Campbell
Chief Building Inspector
Telephone (276) 634-4615

LEGAL**HENRY COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE**
INTENT TO REMOVE AN UNSAFE STRUCTURE

RECORD OWNER: BETTY LOU VIA BOWER

Pursuant to Section 6-300 of the Henry County Code, NOTICE is hereby given that the owner shall remove the structure which might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of the County on or before thirty (30) days following this publication and failure to do so will result in the County having to remove the structure and the cost or expense shall be charged to an paid by the owner and collected as taxes are collected.

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION - Unsafe structure

OWNER - Landowner: BETTY LOU VIA BOWER

PROPERTY LOCATION AND TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER - 940 Sunnybrook Circle - Blackberry District

Henry County, Virginia

Tax Map: 25.5(003)014A, 15-18

Account Number - 017210021

County of Henry
Charles Campbell
Chief Building Inspector
Telephone (276) 634-4615

LEGAL**HENRY COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE**
INTENT TO REMOVE AN UNSAFE STRUCTURE

RECORD OWNER: LEDONIMON WILSON FOYE

Pursuant to Section 6-300 of the Henry County Code, NOTICE is hereby given that the owner shall remove the structure which might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of the County on or before thirty (30) days following this publication and failure to do so will result in the County having to remove the structure and the cost or expense shall be charged to an paid by the owner and collected as taxes are collected.

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION - Unsafe structure

OWNER - Landowner: LEDONIMON WILSON FOYE

PROPERTY LOCATION AND TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER - 7751 Axtom Rd. - Iriswood District

Henry County, Virginia

Tax Map: 75.5(000)000 /087E

Account Number - 058230001

County of Henry
Charles Campbell
Chief Building Inspector
Telephone (276) 634-4615

LEGAL**HENRY COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE**
INTENT TO REMOVE AN UNSAFE STRUCTURE

RECORD OWNER: ALBERT KELLENBENZ, III,

ANGELA SWECKER & JOY BREWERS

Pursuant to Section 6-300 of the Henry County Code, NOTICE is hereby given that the owner shall remove the structure which might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of the County on or before thirty (30) days following this publication and failure to do so will result in the County having to remove the structure and the cost or expense shall be charged to an paid by the owner and collected as taxes are collected.

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION - Unsafe structure

OWNER - Landowner: ALBERT KELLENBENZ, III,

ANGELA SWECKER & JOY BREWERS

PROPERTY LOCATION AND TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER - 2040 Appalachian Dr. - Collinsville District

Henry County, Virginia

Tax Map: 41.4(043)000 /011 ,

Account Number - 068090000

County of Henry
Charles Campbell
Chief Building Inspector
Telephone (276) 634-4615

LEGAL**HENRY COUNTY PUBLIC NOTICE**
INTENT TO REMOVE AN UNSAFE STRUCTURE

RECORD OWNER: KOY VAUGHN

Pursuant to Section 6-300 of the Henry County Code, NOTICE is hereby given that the owner shall remove the structure which might endanger the public health or safety of other residents of the County on or before thirty (30) days following this publication and failure to do so will result in the County having to remove the structure and the cost or expense shall be charged to an paid by the owner and collected as taxes are collected.

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION - Unsafe structure

OWNER - Landowner: KOY VAUGHN

PROPERTY LOCATION AND TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER - 255 Melrose Dr. - Reed Creek District

Henry County, Virginia

Tax Map: 28.2(024)000 /009, 10

Account Number - 031930012

County of Henry
Charles Campbell
Chief Building Inspector
Telephone (276) 634-4615

Case No. CL25001724-00

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104

HENRY CIRCUIT COURT

3160 Kings Mountain Rd, 3rd FL, Martinsville, VA 24112

MICHAEL LEE RAYMOND ISLEY v. GLENDA JARRELL ISLEY

The object of this suit is to:

OBTAIN A DIVORCE A VINCULO MATRIMONII
IT IS ORDERED that GLENDA JARRELL ISLEY appear at the above-named Court and protect her interests on or before FEBRUARY 20, 2026

EDWARD L. CLARK

Book club creates safe space for LGBTQ+ readers

By Jessica Dillon

Rainbow Readers is an LGBTQ+ book club that meets at Magnolia & Main Books with the goal of creating an inclusive space for readers while exploring a shared love of books. The group was created by Ashley Hodges and meets once a month to discuss its current selection.

The club formed after Hodges previously participated in another group that eventually dissolved. A separate group was created in the summer of 2025.

"I wanted to do something for the community for the queer population, but I didn't know where to start," Hodges said.

A longtime reader, Hodges began searching for spaces in the community where she could feel included and decided to create one herself.

"Originally, the group was going to do a silent book club with an option to do clubs," Hodges said. Instead, participants began talking through the meeting, turning it into a traditional book club.

The first book the group read was Ruby Fruit Jungle, which Hodges described as "It was a girl's life from childhood to adulthood, her finding her way." The book resonated personally with her.

"We need more safe spaces for the queer community, also I just love to read," Hodges said. She added that the area has "grown more accepting" over the years.

Sam, Hodges' wife, said growing up locally as a gay person was difficult.

"I grew up around here, she did too, I lived here just about my whole life. Growing up in this area as a gay person was challenging," Sam said.

Sam Hodges said they have since found a sense of community, crediting spaces such as Unicorn AF, a salon owned by Annette Fitzgerald, for helping provide support.

"I've never seen that support outside of my mom," Sam Hodges said.

Ashley Hodges agreed.

"We really have found our community, I feel

like we are growing," she said.

The Pride Coalition has also helped create more inclusive spaces in the area and has recently hosted additional drag shows.

"We think there should be more for the LGBT youth around here, we didn't have that when we were younger," Ashley Hodges said.

She expressed concern about the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth in the area.

"I felt alone a lot being younger and being gay," Sam Hodges said.

In January, the club plans to allow members to choose their own books and give PowerPoint presentations explaining why others should read them. Hodges said she provides free snacks and refreshments at every meeting.

"I try to support other local LGBT businesses," she said.

Rainbow Readers will meet again at 6 p.m. Jan. 30 at Magnolia & Main Books, 810 Main St., Ridgeway. The group is open to everyone, including those interested in trying new books.

Lawless highlights early community work, launch of new nonprofit



Chris Lawless, the incoming Collinsville District representative on the Henry County Board of Supervisors, speaks during a Jan. 1 press conference outside a tobacco and vape shop where he helped facilitate the removal of tires.

By Jessica Dillon

Representative Chris Lawless held a press conference on Jan. 1

— his first day as a member of the

Henry County Board of Supervisors, to highlight recent work he

said he has done in the community, and his plans to continue.

The conference was outside a

tobacco and vape shop at the corner of Oakland Drive and Virginia Avenue, where he said a large stockpile of tires had been identified by the Henry County Sheriff's Office as a code violation.

Lawless said he helped the shop's owner understand the violation and worked with him to have the tires removed.

Because the shop's owner does not speak fluent English, Lawless said he coordinated with another individual outside the area to help communicate.

"I know that the sheriff's office has been doing all the effort they can to get rid of these tires, and a lot of other people in the community," Lawless said. "I actually came in. I was able to com-

municate with the owners, and was able to find a happy medium where we got these tires out of here."

Lawless said the tires were removed within two days.

"The next goal is to start cleaning up the sides of the street, and these people are actually at the tobacco and vape shops, and look, they understand what I'm trying to do," he said.

Lawless said he supports new businesses locating to Collinsville, but emphasized the importance of following regulations from the start.

"If you want to come into the Collinsville District and you want to create a business, let's do it the right way. Let's do it the right way right off the gate, and let's make a difference for everybody," he said.

Lawless said his public presence on New Year's Day was intended to show his commitment to the district.

"Everybody thought my last campaign was just a big show. It's not a show," he said. "I'm out here on January the first letting everybody know that I'm trying to make a difference. And the new campaign going forward into 2026 is trash, grass and drugs, and how all of them are tied together."

Lawless said drugs have been added to his "trash and grass" slogan, referencing drug enforcement efforts led by Sheriff Wayne Davis. Lawless compared Davis to "Batman," and said he would like to serve as his "Robin" in the local fight against drugs.

Davis said he appreciates support from Lawless and the Board

of Supervisors.

"I do not want to see my children leave this area due to the fact that they can't make it here because the business is not here," Lawless said. "Economic growth ties in with trash, grass and drugs."

Earlier in the day, Lawless worked with the Trash Pandas volunteer group to pick up litter and said he plans to continue those efforts.

"I want to make sure that everybody understands what our mission is this year and what we're trying to accomplish," he said. "And I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing, and I ain't gonna stop."

Lawless also announced plans to launch the 'Collinsville Connection,' a group intended to help local businesses network and collaborate. He said the group is expected to launch near the end of January and will be structured as a nonprofit.

"What the Collinsville Connection is gonna do is it's going to allow all these business leaders, small and big, to come together," he said. "So, my small businesses have a voice. Small businesses need to have a voice so they can survive, and they need to get noticed. They need to be out here in the media. We need to give them attention, and we need to support them."

Lawless encouraged residents to reach out if they need assistance.

"It takes all of us as a community in order to be able to do it," he said. "But again, I'm telling you, please don't be a part of the problem. Be a part of the solution."

PAY THE DAY
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JANUARY 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	
					\$1	\$2	\$3
\$4	\$5	\$6	\$7	\$8	\$9	\$10	
\$11	\$12	\$13	\$14	\$15	\$15	\$14	
\$13	\$12	\$11	\$10	\$9	\$8	\$7	
\$6	\$5	\$4	\$3	\$2	\$1	\$1	

The day of the month is the amount you pay to begin your membership.

Start your wellness journey today with:

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- Group classes
- Personal training
- Sports
- Kids Zone

Must be 18 years of age or older and have a valid photo I.D. Limited to one offer per membership. Offer expires 01/31/2026. Additional restrictions may apply.

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2026

Pay the Day Is Back - Join the YMCA for Just \$1-\$31

The Martinsville-Henry County Family YMCA is excited to share a January 2026 community promotion that makes prioritizing health and wellness more accessible than ever.

Pay the Day Membership Special: The day of the month is the amount you pay to begin your YMCA membership. For example, join on January 5 for \$5, January 10 for \$10, and so on. This limited-time offer allows new members to start their wellness journey at an affordable rate while gaining access to:

- A welcoming fitness center

- Group exercise classes

- Personal training options

- Sports programming

- Kids Zone

Important Details:

- Offer valid through January 31, 2026
- Must be 18 years or older with a valid photo ID
- Limited to one offer per membership
- Additional restrictions may apply

Be sure to like the
Henry County Enterprise on Facebook

County shelter caps year with successful mega adoption event



Another pup goes home for Christmas.



Dressed to impress and sporting seasonal colors with a green ear and red tail.



This pooch found a home for the holidays, and the new owners were all smiles. (Contributed photos)

By Jessica Dillon

As shelters across the region continue efforts to place animals in permanent homes, the Henry County Animal Shelter is reflecting on a successful mega adoption event that helped dozens of animals find new beginnings just before the holidays.

The shelter participated in a large-scale adoption event Dec. 20 in Roanoke, organized by the Roanoke Angels of Assisi. The event brought together 12 organizations, including groups focused on adopting out horses and rabbits, and drew a steady stream of potential adopters.

Henry County Animal Shelter transported 26 animals to the event and saw 16 of them adopted.

Before attending, the shelter had to ensure each animal was spayed or neutered and up to date on vaccinations — a cost totaling about \$2,000. Those expenses were covered through donations and partnerships with local businesses.

Shelter manager Dakota Cassell said community support made the trip possible.

"An individual for Giving Tuesday donated \$1,000" toward the event, Cassell said, noting that the donor gave despite the shelter not being recognized as a 501(c)(3).

Autos By Nelson also hosted donation drives at its service centers.

"Between Nelson's and her donation, it ended up covering the mega adoption event," Cassell said, allowing the animals to be adopted at a lower cost.

Among the animals adopted was Bug, a pit bull that came to the shelter through a neglect case. Bug was dyed red and green using animal-safe products for the event by Barking Beauties LLC, a grooming business that regularly assists shelters.

"Bug was the best gentleman ever. I mean literally, he was so sweet he let me do everything. He would've let me paint his nails if I had to," said Kellie Violante, owner of Barking Beauties. "He was just a good boy who came from a bad situation. He was trusting and sweet, you just couldn't tell he ever had a bad experience with a human."

A family initially debated adopting Bug before deciding to take him home.

"He got his paint job on, he got a picture with Santa Claus, he got a new home," Violante said.

Another success story was Kendrick Lapaws, a cat that had been at the shelter since October.

"He was the second adoption of the day,"

Cassell said.

Preparing for the event required significant coordination, Cassell said, with two animal control officers assisting and animals transported across three vehicles.

"It was an adventure," she said.

The shelter set up the day before the event, with Cassell transporting crates ahead of time.

"The dogs were confused where they were going, but excited when they got there," she said.

Cassell said attendance exceeded expectations.

"They actually had made a huge line wrapped around the building waiting to get in," she said.

The event also helped raise awareness of the Henry County Animal Shelter among adopters unfamiliar with its work.

"There were a lot of people that didn't know about us," Cassell said. "We actually took a case summary board, highlighting what we did in the year."

Following the event, Angels of Assisi reached out to explore ways to continue supporting the shelter.

"It's a great event, not only watching our animals, but other animals get adopted," Cassell said. "They had a mini horse there, that was a fun experience to watch."

SAR chapter creates Speaker Bureau



Some of the available speakers include Jarred Marlowe, Andy Doss, Pete Lovell

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