

Patriot Centre II property sold to Appalachian Power for \$1.2 million

By Talyor Boyd

The Industrial Development Authority (IDA) approved the sale of the Patriot Centre II property, or the Bryant property, to Appalachian Power Company during a joint meeting with the Henry County Board of Supervisors on Thursday, May 21.

The supervisors also approved supporting the sale of the Patriot Centre.

In 2025, County Administrator Dale Wagoner said the IDA entered into a purchasing option agreement with a then-unannounced company publicly referred to as 'Project Pathfinder.'

"The initial agreement was for six months, with an option to extend for an additional six months. This option allowed the company to evaluate the site through environmental stud-

ies, feasibility assessments, and planning activities prior to committing to a full purchase. The company has now exercised its option to purchase," he said.

Wagoner said the property's deed will be transferred to Franklin Real Estate Co., a Pennsylvania corporation, that has its mailing address in Columbus, Ohio.

"Franklin Real Estate Co. is the landholdings company for a utility that you probably are all very familiar with called Appalachian Power. The company will use it for future economic development purposes," Wagoner said.

The company has no specific development plans to announce at this time.

The 1,201.95-acre property was sold for \$1.2 million, with (See Patriot p. 2)



The Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and Henry County approved the sale of the Patriot Centre II property, or the Bryant property, to Appalachian Power Company for \$1.2 million.

Graduates reflect on growth, friendship at BHS commencement



The Bassett High School Class of 2026 graduates. (Contributed)

By Jessica Dillon

The Bassett High School Class of 2026 celebrated graduation May 21, with student speakers reflecting on perseverance, friendship and the importance of supporting one another.

The ceremony featured remarks from students Izaak Flanagan, Nathan Goad, Ali Gongloff and Madeline Cooley.

Goad told fellow graduates that commencement represented more than receiving a diploma.

"Today is not a celebration just because we received a diploma, but a celebration for every late night, every challenge, and every moment that brought us here. For most of us, our journey together started in August 2013, and now, as we reach the end of our journey together, we can look back and see just how much we have grown," he said.

He reflected on moments throughout childhood and school that shaped the graduating class.

(See Graduates p. 11)

Carlisle grads power through electric outage



Carlisle School's Class of 2026.

By Taylor Boyd

A power outage may have darkened the room, but it didn't stop the 21 graduates of the 53rd Carlisle School Commencement Exercise from receiving their diplomas on Thursday, May 21.

Head of School Neal Meyer said she hopes the graduates' futures are filled with success, fulfillment, and joy.

"Along the way there will be obstacles and setbacks because that is the nature of life. But you are prepared to face them with determination and resilience that brought you to this moment; they will continue to guide you through the years ahead," she said.

Meyer said every experience,

good and challenging, has something to teach the graduates.

"So today, turn the page on this chapter of your life and step boldly into what comes next," she said.

The Class of 2026 earned 154 college acceptances to 65 universities and received more than \$11.7 million in scholarships.

Meyer thanked the graduating class for the role each of them played in making this year a success, and said they each brought something unique to this community.

Noting the majority of the class had been together and grown up alongside one another since their earliest school days, Meyer said (See Carlisle p. 10)



The Magna Vista class of 2026 celebrates graduation with a cap toss. (Contributed)

Magna Vista graduates urged to keep searching for 'treasure'

By Jessica Dillon

The Magna Vista High School Class of 2026 celebrated graduation May 22, with student speakers reflecting on personal growth, gratitude and the importance of discovering one's purpose.

Student speaker Matthew Griffin centered his remarks on the idea of "treasure," describing it as the experiences and relationships that shape a person's identity.

"I want to talk about something we already have — something we've been building these past four years: Treasure," Griffin said.

"Not the kind buried in the ground or locked in a chest. I'm talking about the treasure that makes you who you are. The treasure you discovered in friendships, creativity, leadership, or simply figuring out where you fit in."

(See Magna p. 11)



The high school careers of the Class of 2026 culminated Friday at Martinsville High School's commencement ceremony. (Contributed)

Class of 2026 encouraged to move forward with confidence, purpose

By Jessica Dillon

Martinsville High School celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2026 on May 22, with student speakers reflecting on perseverance, growth and the opportunities that lie ahead.

During the ceremony, Gregory Moore and student School Board representative Kamori Dillard addressed classmates, encouraging them to embrace the future with confidence.

Moore began his speech by acknowl-

edging his faith and thanking those gathered for the milestone occasion.

"I'd like to start by thanking my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for being here and bringing everyone together today for this graduation," Moore said.

He reflected on how quickly high school passed after hearing repeated advice from older students and adults.

"Coming in as freshmen, all we ever heard was, 'enjoy these four

(See Class p. 10)

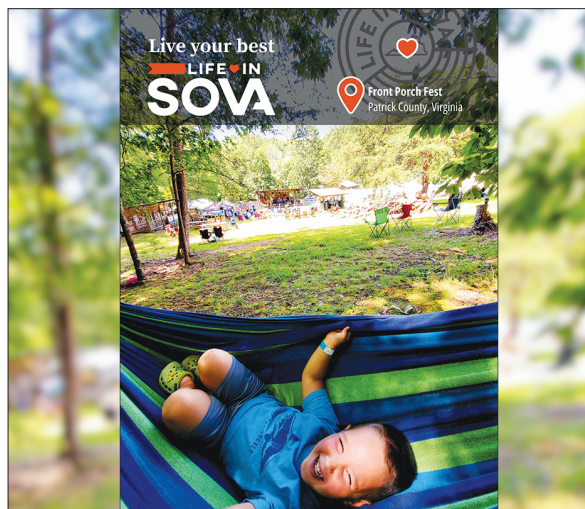
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FOR MORE UPDATES



WPPDC receives grant for tourism marketing



Live your best Life in SOVA - Front Porch Fest

The West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) received a \$20,000 grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)'s Marketing Leverage Program for its Life in SOVA initiative.

The WPPDC will use this funding to strengthen the Life in SOVA initiative through a strategic marketing & development plan, website enhancements, new content and creative assets, and targeted advertising to promote the region's tourism destinations. Life in SOVA is a regional branding initiative that highlights the cities of Danville and Martinsville, the counties of Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania, and the Town of Rocky Mount. At the core of this project is www.lifeinsova.com, a comprehensive digital hub that features the region's businesses, events, outdoor attractions, and community life.

"We are excited to receive the \$20,000 grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation to support and enhance our Life in SOVA initiative," said Amada Gray, Tourism and Marketing Specialist for WPPDC. "Southern Virginia offers outstanding tourism destinations and unique opportunities, and this funding will allow us to further promote our region's many assets. We welcome everyone to come 'Live their best Life in SOVA' and enjoy our friendly communities, outdoor adventures, and rich experiences that Southern Virginia has to offer."

In celebration of National Travel & Tourism Week, Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) awarded more than \$2.2 million in matching grant and sponsorship funds to 143 tourism programs across the Commonwealth. These awards are funded through VTC's Marketing Leverage and Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) Marketing Programs.

These programs pair local marketing invest-



Life in SOVA - Sounds on the Square

ments with matching state funds to increase visitation, extend overnight stays, and grow traveler spending across the Commonwealth. This funding cycle, local partners will commit more than \$4.3 million to match the VTC grant funds, generating more than \$6.5 million in new marketing and event production initiatives focused on increasing overnight visitation to Virginia across all nine GO Virginia regions. In total, the awards will support 143 marketing programs and impact 858 tourism partners statewide.

"Tourism is a powerful engine for economic development in Southern Virginia," said Michael Armbrister, executive director of the agency. "Since the inception of our tourism program in 2022, we've witnessed the positive ripple effects that tourism investments have on job creation, small businesses, and overall community vitality. This grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation will help us to strengthen collaborations with regional partners, amplify the Life in SOVA initiative, attract more visitors, and help drive sustainable economic growth throughout our footprint."

"Effective tourism marketing is key to turning interest into visitation and visitation into economic impact," said Rita McClenny, president and CEO of Virginia Tourism Corporation. "These programs give our partners the tools to tell more compelling stories about their destinations, connect with travelers in meaningful ways, and inspire deeper exploration across Virginia."

The VTC's tourism marketing and sponsorship programs are designed to maximize limited marketing dollars through public-private partnerships, stimulate new tourism promotion initiatives, and extend the iconic Virginia is for Lovers brand to drive visitation and in-



Life in SOVA - Infinity Acres Ranch

crease visitor spending. Using the hub-and-spoke tourism partnership model, Virginia entities partner to apply for funding. Partners may include cities, towns, counties, convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, local or regional destination marketing organizations, museums, attractions, cultural events, and other tourism-related non-profits and private businesses.

These grant programs assist tourism-oriented applicants by matching their marketing commitment with additional funding to reach new markets and engage both new and repeat visitors:

- The Marketing Leverage Program is a reimbursable grant program that helps Virginia travel industry partners—including small businesses, DMOs, attractions, accommodations, and events—expand their marketing efforts.

- The Virginia DMO Marketing Program provides funding to destination marketing organizations for initiatives that demonstrate measurable economic impact and are designed to drive visitation to Virginia.

The VTC will open a Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program grant round in summer 2026, which is designed to assist small tourism-oriented businesses and organizations with fall and winter marketing initiatives. The Virginia Special Events and Festivals Program will open in late 2026 for events occurring between January 1 and December 31, 2027.

The next round of the Marketing Leverage Program and the Virginia DMO Marketing Program will open in February 2027. Organizations and businesses interested in applying for these grant opportunities may visit vatc.org/grants for more information.

Virginia Foundation for Community College Education honors philanthropists at annual luncheon

The National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE) has received the 20th Annual Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy. The organization was nominated for the award by Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) and honored at Virginia Foundation for Community College Education's (VFCCE) 20th Annual Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy Luncheon.

The event honored more than two dozen individuals, families, and businesses from all 23 of Virginia's Community Colleges, as well as the VFCCE itself. Award recipients were nominated in recognition of their exceptional commitment to the growth and development of Virginia's community colleges and their respective foundations.

In his welcoming remarks, Chancellor David Doré saluted and thanked the donors for their unwavering commitment to students whose potential might otherwise go unrealized. "The individuals and organizations we honor in this room represent an extraordinary \$27 million in lifetime giving to Virginia's community colleges," he said.

The sentiment was echoed by Secretary of Education, Jeffery Smith, who underscored the importance of philanthropy and its ability to remove barriers that could impede or even block the way forward for students short on resources. "Every Virginian deserves a pathway to economic opportunity," he said.

In addition to Secretary Smith, distinguished guests in attendance included State Board members as well as members of the VFCCE



David Ford (Strada Educational Foundation), Tonya Hall (InsideTrack), Kevin Logan (NACCE), Rebecca Corbin (NACCE), Chancellor David Dore, Dr. Greg Hodges, Mrs. Renee Hodges, and Tiffani Underwood celebrate NACCE's award.

Board of Directors. Author, philanthropist, and educator Brent L. Kendrick, Ph.D., whose career reflects a lifelong commitment to teaching and community college education, delivered the keynote address.

Included among the 2026 Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy recipients is Patrick & Henry Community College, National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship.

Patriot

(cont. from page 1)

part of the land in a conservation easement.

IDA Chairman Len Dillon said he's excited about the sale of the Bryant property.

"It lays the groundwork for a lot of future development and prosperity for the community," Dillon said.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Jim Adams, of the Blackberry District, said Appalachian Power is a well-established company and valued partner in the community.

"We appreciate their continued investment in Henry County and their role in supporting the infrastructure necessary for future economic opportunity," he said.

Adams said the county purchased the Bryant property around the same time it purchased the property for Common-

wealth Crossing.

"The development of Commonwealth Crossing has been long in going through the permitting process and the grading process, but it was much easier to manage because" of its location.

"In looking at the development of the Bryant property, it would have to be done with a lot of grants and a significant timetable for the locality. Whereas when a corporation comes in, they just do it.

"They'll have to wait on permitting, they'll have to pass all the regulatory requirements, all the different agencies that have a hand in it. But they already invested time and money because they had options on the property going back for over a year. They've done sampling of soil, they've done a lot of due diligence. That tells me this is not a project

by accident. This was a project with a determination to see an end to it. From the type of services that they provide to the general region, it's a big win," Adams said.

Adams said Appalachian Power's purchase of the property also puts it back on Henry County's tax rolls immediately.

Appalachian Power President and COO Brian Abraham said the company is always looking for ways to strengthen its long-term operations and better serve its customers.

"This purchase represents a direct strategic investment in our future, and we're proud to play a role in supporting growth across the region," Abraham said.

The Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp. played a key role in supporting the transaction.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Meetings

Tuesday, June 9

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

Events

Thursday, May 28

Move to Martinsville and Piedmont Arts present an evening of New Orleans piano with John "Papa" Gros, 6:30 p.m., at Piedmont Arts. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Concert begins at 7 p.m. Admission is \$20 per person. Beer and wine will be available at the cash bar. Purchase tickets at Piedmont Arts or online at PiedmontArts.org.

Mental Health Forum, 6 to 8 p.m., New College Institute, Lecture Hall, 191 Fayette Street, Martinsville. Dinner will be served and community resources will be provided. For more information, call Preston at 276-634-8311.

Friday, May 29 - Saturday, May 30

The Friends of the Blue Ridge Regional Library are hosting a book sale in the basement of the main branch, 310 E. Church St., Martinsville. Members

Only sale is 1-5 p.m. on Friday; Saturday's sale is open to the public, 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Lots of books to choose from, hardback & paperback fiction; Agatha Christie books; & youth books; children's; history, westerns, puzzles, & more. Next sale is July 11.

Saturday, May 30

Rangeley Ruritan Hot Dog Sale and Tractor Show, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Rangeley Ruritan Building, 134 Calloway Drive, Fieldale. Meal includes 2 got dogs w/works, chips and drink for \$6. Eat in or take out. Desserts will be sold separately. Proceeds are used for community projects.

Community Memorial Walk and Tree Planting in Honor of Sherri Hazelwood, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., Smith River Sports Complex Lower Level, 1000 Irisburg Road, Axton.

Tuesday, June 2

Clyde Hooker Awards, 5:30 p.m., Piedmont Arts, 215 Starling Ave, Martinsville.

Ongoing

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 FIELDALE VA 0626 meets on Tuesdays at 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Bassett Public Library, 3969 Fairystone Hwy, Bassett. New members are welcome. For more information, call Patti Farmer (276) 358-0489.

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

Mental Health Forum, Community Memorial Walk set

Empowering Voices, Inc. is bringing the community together through two powerful events focused on mental health awareness, healing, remembrance, and connection during Mental Health Awareness Month.

Empowering Voices, Inc., will host a Mental Health Forum on Thursday, May 28, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the New College Institute, Lecture Hall, 191 Fayette Street, Martinsville. Dinner will be served and community resources will be provided.

The forum will feature diverse local leaders, advocates, and community voices sharing conversations and lived experiences surrounding mental health, resilience, support systems, and recovery. It will be moderated by Jenny Yates, LCSW, Four Rivers Counseling CEO, and hosted by Richard Harris - Regional Manager for Southside Behavioral Health Consortium.

Featured panelists include Tony Davis - Luna Moth Tattoo Studio Owner & Artist, Dominique Hylton - Minister Elder, Charika Carter - Mental Health Liaison with Danville City Schools, Sharon Ortiz - Epidemiologist, West Piedmont Health Director, and Patrick Rodgers - veteran/founder of All Vets.

"This event is about creating safe conversations, breaking stigma, and reminding people that they are not alone," said Latoya Preston, Empowering Voices CEO and community advocate. "Mental health impacts every family and every community. We want people to leave feeling empowered, informed, and supported."

Preston also noted that kindness and care is essential when addressing community and individual mental health. "People may forget what you said, but they will never forget how safe, seen, and supported you made them feel," she added.

In addition, Empowering Voices, Inc. will partner with community organizations for a Community Memorial Walk and Tree Planting in Honor of Sherri Hazlewood on Saturday, May 30, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Smith River Sports Complex - Lower Level.

The memorial event will celebrate the life and legacy of Sherri Hazlewood while encouraging healing, unity, and awareness surrounding grief, mental wellness, suicide prevention and community support.

Memorial Walk participants are asked to meet at the lower level of the Sports Complex (near the Paw Path, below the Amphitheater) where the walk will begin. Participants may wear suicide prevention colors, "something teal or purple," and bring soil from home to plant the tree, and/or a note on biodegradable paper in honor of the day's events.

Community members, advocates, families, and local organizations are encouraged to attend both events and participate in meaningful discussions and remembrance activities designed to strengthen mental health awareness and suicide prevention throughout the region.

For more information, call Preston at 276-634-8311.

Patrick County, Martinsville added to USDA drought disaster designation

An additional 24 Virginia localities have received drought disaster designations by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Brooke Rollins. Farmers in the primary designated counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Buckingham, Campbell, Charlotte, Henry, Nelson, Pittsylvania, and Sussex are eligible to be considered for certain assistance from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). Farmers in Albemarle, Augusta, Bedford, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Fluvanna, Franklin, Greensville, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Patrick, Prince Edward, Prince George, Rockbridge, Scott, Southampton, and Surry counties, and the cities of Bristol, Danville, Lynchburg, and Martinsville are also eligible for FSA drought emergency assistance as they are contiguous to primary drought designated localities in Virginia and Tennessee.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, these localities suffered from a drought intensity value during the growing season of 1) D2 Drought-Severe for eight or more consecutive weeks or 2) D3 Drought-Extreme or D4 Drought-Exceptional.

Drought disaster assistance includes FSA emergency loans. Provided eligibility requirements are met, FSA will assess each emergency loan application individually to consider specific circumstances and needs. Farmers in eligible localities have eight months from the date of disaster declaration to apply for emergency loans.

The counties of Arlington, Brunswick, Campbell, Charlotte, Dinwiddie, Fairfax, Franklin, Grayson, Greensville, Halifax, Isle of Wight, King George, Loudoun, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Pittsylvania, Prince William, Southampton, Stafford, Surry, Sussex, Washington, and Westmoreland, and the cities of Alexandria, Emporia and Suffolk had previously received drought disaster designations. Farmers in these localities should contact their local USDA FSA office for more information and to verify their exact filing date, as application rules can be complex when navigating multiple designations.

For more information on available assistance programs and the application process, please visit the Virginia FSA State Office website at www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Virginia.

United Way VITA program tops \$2.1 million in federal refunds

The United Way of Henry County and Martinsville announced the successful completion of the 2026 tax season, crediting the dedication of its VITA volunteers.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program finished the season with 2,021 tax returns filed, resulting in \$2,120,101 in federal refunds and \$505,250 in tax preparation savings.

Those totals include individuals who received filing assistance as well as residents who ultimately did not need to file taxes, helping them avoid unnecessary commercial preparation fees. "Our volunteers are the lifeblood of this initiative and keep things running smoothly," the organization said in a release.

Several volunteers said they continue participating because they believe it is important to bring money earned in Martinsville-Henry County within the community and supporting local businesses.

One longtime volunteer, Kathy, said, "Everything is run by IRS tax standards, no corners are ever cut, and we take pride in finding every

deduction possible for the individuals and families who walk through the door day after day and year after year."

Another longtime volunteer, David, said he hopes younger volunteers will train for future tax seasons.

"This is a great opportunity for high school seniors and college students looking for hands-on experience," David said.

United Way also shared a success story from a local family that used its tax refund to pay rent for the remainder of the year and received one free month from its landlord.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program remains free to qualified individuals in the Martinsville-Henry County area. The service is provided each year through volunteer IRS-certified tax preparers working with United Way of Henry County and Martinsville.

For more information about the program or becoming a certified tax preparer, contact Lisa Frick at 276-403-5976 or visit www.UnitedWay-ofHCM.org/VITA.

Former county sheriff's deputy recently charged

A former Henry County Sheriff's Office deputy was charged in connection with a 2025 incident, according to a release from Sheriff Wayne Davis.

Michael Kevin Cagle Jr., a former deputy, responded to a breaking and entering in progress call on November 26, 2025. As a result, one person was charged with breaking and entering and an outstanding felony warrant.

The individual was transported to the Henry County Adult Detention Center (ADC). Before being escorted inside the center, a verbal altercation allegedly occurred between Cagle and the arrestee, which escalated into Cagle allegedly using force against the individual.

No injuries were reported.

Supervisors were made aware of the incident moments later and responded appropriately by ensuring the matter was immediately reviewed. An internal investigation was initiated, and it was determined that Cagle had violated multiple agency policies, the release stated. As a result, his employment with the sheriff's office was terminated, effec-

tive immediately.

Davis then contacted the Virginia State Police and the Henry County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office and requested an independent investigation into the incident. Following the Virginia State Police investigation, Cagle was charged with a misdemeanor count of assault and battery.

He was arrested in Goldsboro, N.C., on May 18, and is currently being held without bond pending extradition back to Virginia.

Davis said he and his office "remain fully committed to transparency, accountability, and maintaining the trust of the citizens we serve. While any allegation of misconduct involving a law enforcement officer is concerning, the actions taken in this case demonstrate this administration's commitment to addressing such matters swiftly, professionally, and appropriately."

He added the office "will continue working every day to earn and maintain the trust of this community through integrity, accountability, and transparent leadership."

Thank you for reading

OPINION

Finding a Cure for ALS aka Lou Gehrig's Disease



Morgan Griffith

Representative

"I AM ALS."

That was the message promoted by a May public service announcement in support of ALS research and treatments.

The minute-long video in honor of ALS Awareness Month features several celebrities and includes a posthumous message from the late Eric Dane. In February 2026, Dane passed away due to his struggles with ALS.

Dane, the beloved actor from the Grey's Anatomy TV series who played Dr. Mark Sloan (also known as McSteamy), became a fierce ALS advocate following his April 2025 diagnosis.

After his diagnosis, Dane connected with I AM ALS.

I AM ALS is an ALS patient advocacy group that connects the ALS community with resources to promote policy action.

The group's co-founders, Brian Wallach and his wife Sandra Abrevaya, are acutely familiar with ALS. Wallach received his ALS diagnosis the day his newborn daughter came home from the hospital.

Such heartbreaking stories help raise awareness about the ALS movement. Dane was ready to serve the movement with a purpose.

As part of his advocacy, Dane visited Capitol Hill to share his ALS story with lawmakers.

In September 2025, I had the opportunity to

meet with Dane and discuss the federal path forward to help the ALS community.

Remarks from our meeting, together with Dane's other lawmaker meetings, are featured in the now-released documentary Ring Every Bell: Eric Dane's Final Act.

The 20-minute documentary chronicles Dane's ALS advocacy journey, shares his personal perspective on the debilitating illness and activates enthusiasm for the I AM ALS movement.

In the documentary, I mentioned to Dane that I come from an ALS hotspot in the Roanoke Valley. Friends, family friends and others in our community know of someone impacted by ALS.

Personal stories like these and too many others have helped shape the I AM ALS movement as well as the federal response to this rare disease.

In April 2026, Wallach and Abrevaya testified before the Health Subcommittee that I chair. They expressed support for the Accelerating Access to Critical Therapies for ALS Reauthorization Act.

Five years ago, both of them testified in front of the Health Subcommittee as well when this legislation was first introduced. At the time, Wallach was able to deliver his testimony with the support of his wife.

Wallach's ALS condition is so debilitating, at the time of his second appearance before my Subcommittee, he was unable to speak or move. But his appearance at the hearing beside his strong wife sent an incredibly powerful message.

Despite receiving news, when first diagnosed, that he had six months to live, Wallach has lived with ALS for more than eight years.

Further, aided by technology, Wallach testified that the ACT for ALS bill is our best chance at finding a cure.

This bill reauthorizes critical federal funds for ALS research. This research supports the

development of investigational drugs and clinical trials.

Additionally, the bill helps support funding for other neurodegenerative diseases, like Huntington's Disease.

Later that day, I attended an "ACT for ALS" press conference. The bill's sponsor, Democrat Mike Quigley, as well as Wallach and Abrevaya were a part of the event to address the ALS bill.

As one of the speakers, I reaffirmed my commitment as Health Subcommittee Chairman to help deliver hope for ALS-impacted Americans through this health care policy.

Accordingly, in May, my Health Subcommittee reported the bill to the full Energy and Commerce Committee.

Our full Committee debated the bill, and I look forward to continued opportunities to help get this to the House floor.

The week following the release of the Dane documentary and public service announcement, I was proud to vote with the Committee to advance the ALS bill promoted by the likes of Dane, Wallach and Abrevaya, among others.

As we continue to build off the legislative momentum on this critical solution, so too does the ALS awareness campaign.

Raising awareness on ALS makes me think of those we lose in our community to the devastating illness.

A political mentor of mine, former Virginia Delegate Raymond R. Robrecht of Salem, died on Christmas Eve in 1994.

There is also my Roanoke Valley swimming friend Rob Lawson, who passed away in 2022.

These are only two of the people I have known who succumbed to ALS.

They are among countless others that help light the fuse for the I AM ALS Movement.

For those who endure, treat and advocate on behalf of the cause, I stand with you.

I AM ALS.

A free rooster named Cornflake steals the household spotlight

After Henry and Chester, you'd think we would have learned not to get a rooster, their reigns of terror severely overshadowing good ole' Oliver's amiability.

But no experience across my decades of keeping chickens had prepared me for the surprise that is Cornflake.

Henry, our first rooster, was hell on wheels. This Rhode Island Red was the lesson to never, ever get another rooster. A few years later, along came Chester, completely by accident, as we had purchased him as a biddy (female chick), but it turned out they got that wrong.

Fortunately, Chester was a Buff Orpington, a docile and gentle breed, and he was exactly that. After he disappeared mysteriously (poor chickens are quite vulnerable), we made sure to replace him with another Buff Orpington rooster.

Though Oliver looked like Chester, he acted halfway like Henry (no one could be as bad as Henry was). We kept a broom by the door to shoe the aggressive Oliver away if he came too close.

Chester also disappeared, which wasn't too disappointing. That's one instance where it was OK to let nature take its course.

So with that checkered past with roosters, it sort of surprised me that I was thinking of getting another one. Part of me wanted a rooster, and the other part warned that I'd soon regret it – sort of like you spend most of the time eating healthily and being on a diet,



Holly Kozelsky

but suddenly you grab for a cookie.

Thus when I saw an ad for a young rooster in Roanoke being offered free, I responded. These people had thought they had all biddies, but this one ended up being a rooster, which was not allowed in their neighborhood.

I looked up the breed – Silkie – to make sure it was a gentle, docile breed (even though Chester forever ruined the guarantee on that).

We met the family in Rocky Mount. The first sign that there was something weird was that the lady got out of the van holding the rooster in her arms – no box, no cat carrier, no suit of armor.

She handed this white fluffball over to me. Her little boy looked crestfallen, eyes red and puffy, and he gave a solemn and loving farewell to Snowball.

My daughter's friend christened the 7-month-old bird Cornflake. Though we had brought a cat carrier, he rode home peacefully on our laps.

Hens can be vicious creatures. You've heard the term "pecking order"? The stronger hens literally peck at and torment and injure the weaker chickens. This Cornflake was a little smaller than our big hens are, and he looked vulnerable. We couldn't leave him alone with the hens just yet, so we put him to sleep overnight in the cat carrier on the kitchen counter.

The next day, we introduced him to the hens gradually. They vacillated from ignoring him to trying to get away from him.

By the third day he ran behind them, but they kept evading him. He gave up and ran straight back to us.

Cornflake likes to be picked up and held and pet.

Now it's been a couple of weeks. It looks like the hens are not going to attack him, but they are in no hurry to welcome him into their inner circle yet, either. Cornflake hasn't caught on that he is supposed to corral the hens, and guide them toward food and roosting places and dust baths. He sometimes follows behind them, but he usually wanders about on his own.

Each evening around 7 p.m., Cornflake hops up onto the porch swing or the window sill. He looks around some, and he dozes off



Cornflake sits on the windowsill as he waits for bedtime.

some. Around 7:30 or 8 p.m., we pick him up and bring him to the bathroom, and he walks into the cat carrier.

There's no need any more for an alarm clock, because his high-pitched, warbly crowing awakens us each morning. That's a snooze button you can't push.

Finally one of us gets up and goes to the bathroom to let Cornflake out. He likes to walk around the kitchen for a couple of minutes before we scoop him up, talk sweetly to him and pet him around his head and neck as we walk him to the chicken coop.

We open the door and put him down, where he waddles over toward the hens and crows a time or two, and the hens dart away and hop up onto a perch to get away.

They'll all spend the day together in the coop. They haven't pecked on or hurt him yet, so he should be safe – if not adored by his harem.

When we get home from work, we open the coop door, and they run out into the yard and go about their business, the hens wandering about in a group, the rooster hovering around the kitchen porch area.

That is, until about 7 p.m. Though the hens like to push the boundaries of night time – they'll stay out until it's nearly dark – Cornflake heads to his windowsill or porch swing and awaits another night in the cat carrier.

We know he'll have to get used to sleeping in the coop one day. Cornflake needs to grow up a little more and assert himself better.

For now, though, he'll be as pampered and coddled as he asks to be.

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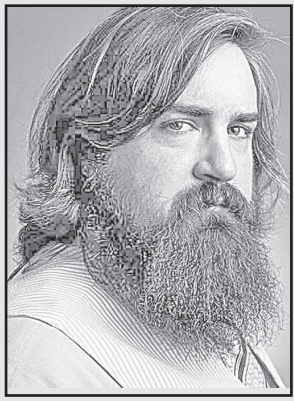
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OPINION

A solution in search of a problem



By Ben R. Williams

It's rare that reading the news brings a smile to my face these days, but this graduation season has brought me a great deal of joy.

On May 8 at the graduation ceremony for the University of Central Florida, commencement speaker Gloria Caulfield, a real estate executive, began extolling the virtues of AI to the graduates, referring to it as "the next industrial revolution."

Immediately, the graduates began booing. "OK, I struck a chord," Caulfield said as the boos intensified. I recommend watching the video, it's very satisfying.

The very next day at Middle Tennessee State University, commencement speaker and record executive Scott Borchetta told the graduating class that "AI is rewriting production as we sit here." Cue immediate boos. "Deal with it," Borchetta continued, "Like I said, it's a tool." Needless to say, the booing continued.

On May 15, former Google CEO Eric Schmidt told the graduating class at the University of Arizona that, "The question is not whether AI will shape the world. It will. The question is whether you will help shape artificial intelligence."

Believe it or not, he was booed within an inch of his life.

The cherry on top of all this is what happened at Glendale Community College on May 15. As students took the stage to receive their diplomas, the wrong names were read and many students were skipped entirely. Why?

"We're using a new AI system as our reader," college president Tiffany Hernandez explained to the audience. "Boooooo00000."

"Yup, yup," she soldiered on. "So that is a lesson learned for us."

Regular readers of this column will know that I despise generative AI. I do think it has its limited uses, particularly in the medical field. It's just that in all other forms, I view it as a search engine and a Large Language Model (LLM) wearing a trench coat and eating our natural resources in order to generate bland garbage and glossy, soulless flyers for community events.

Defenders of AI, who are generally either people who stand to make a lot of money from it or people who tried it and found it to be a wonderful alternative to thinking, tend to say the same thing: hey man, like it or not, AI is here to stay, so get with the times or get left in the dust.

I'm not a Luddite. I also understand that whenever a new technology sweeps in, it immediately causes pushback.

For example, when homes started getting wired for electricity around the turn of the century, there was pushback. There's a famous cartoon from 1900 depicting the dangers of electricity, featuring a city street

clogged with wires. A horse lays dead in the middle of the road after having been zapped to death, while at the top of the frame, a man is ensnared by a skull-headed spider with legs made from electrical wires and a lightbulb-shaped abdomen. It's pretty metal. It's also not wrong; early electrical wiring was messy and dangerous and often caused electrocutions and fires.

There was also pushback when automobiles hit the scene. Many people thought they were noisy and dangerous, a poor alternative to the reliable horse. Again, they weren't exactly wrong; even today, when cars are safer than they've ever been before, more than a million people are killed in car accidents worldwide every year.

But there's a substantial difference between these technologies and AI: despite the drawbacks, their usefulness is immediately apparent. Once you have experienced electricity in your home, there's no going back to oil lamps and washing your clothes by hand down by the creek. Once you've experienced the ease, convenience, and speed of a decent automobile, there's no going back to a horse-drawn carriage. These aren't products you have to sell; you just have to make them available and the sales will follow.

Like I said, AI has its uses, but in most applications, it's a solution in search of a problem. The billionaires behind AI present it as a revolution, as the wave of the future, but that's something it can never be. AI cannot innovate or say anything new; all it can do is chew up and digest ideas that have already been written and art that has already been created and repackage it in a new form that is shiny, glossy, bland, and often wildly incorrect.

The reason AI is getting pushed so hard is because the companies behind it realize they're hemorrhaging goodwill, particularly among the younger generations who see it as an existential threat to their continued employment, not to mention the environment. At the World Economic Forum earlier this year, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella dropped a very telling quote, saying that AI will lose public support unless it's used to "do something useful that changes the outcomes of people and communities and countries and industries."

"We will quickly lose even the social permission to take something like energy, which is a scarce resource, and use it to generate these tokens, if these tokens are not improving health outcomes, education outcomes, public sector efficiency, private sector competitiveness, across all sectors, small and large, right?"

Nadella is right: it's difficult to get the social permission to build The Giant Warehouse That Ruins Your Water and Drives Up Your Electric Bill when all it produces in return is garbage articles that all sound the same and photos of your aunt if she was wearing 1980s makeup. Humans are already great at creating crap; we don't need a fancy robot to help.

AI is almost certainly here to stay in one form or another, but it remains to be seen what form that will take. However, the AI tech bros trying to cram it down America's collective throat with a ram rod need to understand that its current form — a tedious thief of creativity that's trying to steal our jobs — is not terribly popular.

Don't take it from me; take it from a sea of booing college graduates.

Column Sponsored by: Dr. Mensink



The grave of Moses L. Davidson located at the Old Chapel Church in Penhook. (Photo courtesy of Larry Eanes.)

Community Chronicles

By Jarred Marlowe

While I would not consider myself deeply experienced in genealogy research, I recently decided to spend some time looking into my ancestors who served during the American Civil War. Using Ancestry.com, I had already built my family tree back several generations, which allowed me to identify which of my ancestors would have been of fighting age between 1861 and 1865. After narrowing it down, I came away with a list of 21 possible names and made my way to the Bassett Historical Center to see what I could uncover.

Inside their military research room, appropriately nicknamed "The War Room," I began digging through the Confederate roster books to determine which regiments and companies these men may have served in. Before long, my original list of 21 had narrowed to 11 confirmed soldiers, along with a few others who may have served but could not be positively identified because of how common their names were.

Once I had my confirmed list, I turned to the Virginia Regimental Histories series published in the 1980s. These books contain unit histories, rosters, and whatever details could be gathered about the individual soldiers who served in each regiment. Fortunately, the Bassett Historical Center is one of the few places I know of with a complete set, and they are an incredible resource for anyone researching Virginia soldiers. After pulling the appropriate volumes and working through the rosters, I was able to piece together the following stories:

- George B. Hankins, a 22-year-old Henry County resident, enlisted in Company F of the 57th Virginia Infantry in July 1861 but was discharged later that year in December.

- Samuel E. Lawrence, age 43, joined Company F of the 36th Virginia Infantry in October 1864 and was present during the Battle of Waynesboro in the closing months of the war.

- James P. Johnston of Henry County served in Company I of the 21st Virginia Infantry. He was wounded at Cedar Mountain in 1862 and again hospitalized following the Battle of Cedar Creek in 1864 before returning to duty.

- George W. Fowlkes of Pittsylvania County fought with the 38th Virginia Infantry during the Peninsula Campaign before dying at Richmond's Chimborazo Hospital in June 1862.

- George W. Belcher of Franklin County enlisted in the 24th Virginia Infantry in 1861 and fought under Jubal Early at First Manassas and

during the Peninsula Campaign before receiving a medical discharge in 1862.

Some records reveal difficult or unexpected paths. George T. Matthews, serving in the 18th Battalion Heavy Artillery, was listed absent without leave, later deserted in 1864, took the oath of allegiance to the United States, and spent the remainder of the war in Norfolk.

Older men also entered Confederate service. Cary Carter of Henry County enlisted in the 42nd Virginia Infantry at age 49 but was discharged for asthma and what surgeons described as appearing "the age of sixty." James W. Shorter of Franklin County enlisted in the 57th Virginia Infantry at age 51.

Other records document the hardships beyond the battlefield. Moses L. Davidson of the 10th Virginia Cavalry lost his horse during fighting at Upperville in 1863 and later suffered combat wounds in 1864. William G. Reynolds of Pittsylvania County died from illness in Petersburg in 1862 while serving with the 57th Virginia Infantry.

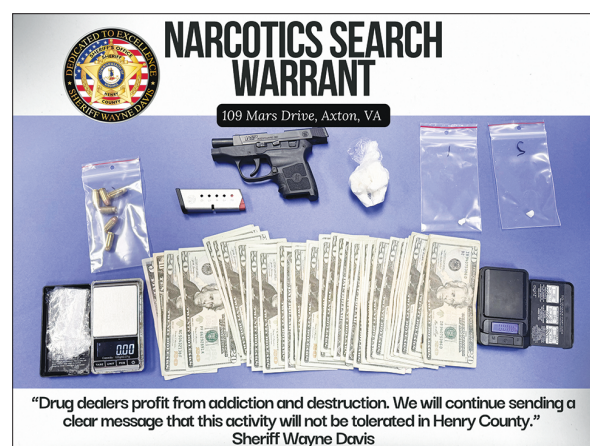
The war also carried local men far from home. Dillard Steele of Rockingham County, North Carolina, serving in the 45th North Carolina Infantry, was captured at Spotsylvania Court House in 1864 and later imprisoned at both Point Lookout, Maryland, and Elmira Prison in New York before being exchanged near the end of the war.

So, as you can probably tell, some of these records are fascinating, some are heartbreaking, and others are not exactly flattering. But that is the nature of history. History is not supposed to be polished or comfortable all the time. It is the story of real people living real lives, making decisions, enduring hardships, and experiencing moments that were often messy and complicated. That is what makes it worth studying.

We should never lose sight of the people who came before us, and I would strongly encourage anyone with an interest in local or family history to spend some time at places like the Bassett Historical Center. You never know what stories are waiting to be uncovered, or how your own family may have played a role in the larger story of American history.

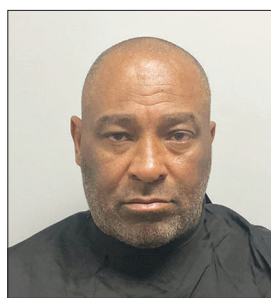
Jarred Marlowe is a local resident and historian. He is a member of the Col. George Waller Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Blue & Gray Education Society, and the committee chair for the Martinsville-Henry County 250 Committee. He may be reached at marloweja15@gmail.com.

Axton pair charged following narcotics search warrant

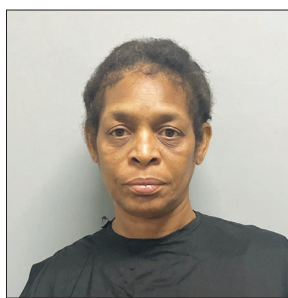


"Drug dealers profit from addiction and destruction. We will continue sending a clear message that this activity will not be tolerated in Henry County." Sheriff Wayne Davis

The Henry County Sheriff's Office Vice Unit served a narcotics search warrant at 109 Mars Drive Axton on May 21, following an investigation into the distribution of illegal narcotics. At approximately 6 a.m., the SWAT Team executed the warrant.



Timothy Lee Smith



Amanda Michelle Henderson

Two individuals, Timothy Lee Smith, 58, and Amanda Michelle Henderson, 57, were located inside the home at the time the warrant was executed and charged accordingly, according to a release from authorities.

During the search, investigators located suspected crack cocaine, a firearm, and approximately \$744 U.S. currency. As part of the investigation, two vehicles were also seized from the property, a 2008 Mercedes GL 450 and a 2010 BMW 328i con-

vertible.

Smith is being held in the Henry County Adult Detention Center with no bond on charges of possession with the intent to sell Schedule I or II drugs (cocaine), possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of a Schedule I or II drug while possessing a firearm.

Henderson is being held with a \$1,500 bond, charged with possession with the intent to sell Schedule I or II drugs (Cocaine).

"Drug dealers' profit from addiction and destruction. We will continue sending a clear message that this activity will not be tolerated in Henry County." Sheriff Wayne Davis said.

This investigation remains ongoing. Additional information may be released as it becomes available. Anyone with information regarding narcotics activity in Henry County is asked to contact the Henry County Sheriff's Office at (276) 638-8751 or Crime Stoppers at 63-CRIME (632-7463), or on the Tip411 App. You can remain anonymous.

See more at www.henrycountyenterprise.com

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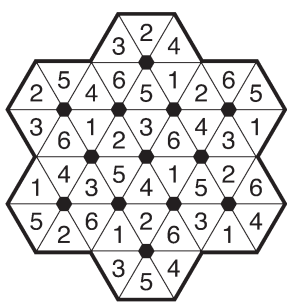
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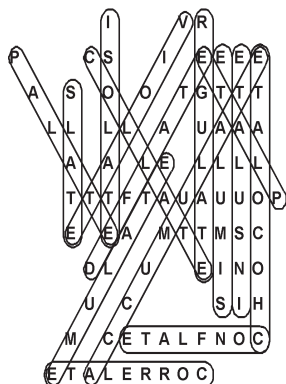
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SNOWFLAKES

solution



A LATE ENDING



SCRAMBLERS

solution

1. Moral; 2. Shrunk
3. Hamlet; 4. Creak

Today's Word

HOMEMAKER



answer



Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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perienced this financial crime, turn the card over and call the issuer at the number provided; they may be able to freeze the card before some or all of the funds are drained. You should also report this crime to law enforcement to document what happened should there be a means of restitution down the road.

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ENTERPRISE EXCHANGE

In the spirit of partnership, we're sharing highlights from our sister newsroom at The Enterprise (www.theenterprise.net) to help keep our readers in Henry County and Martinsville informed.



Schools Superintendent Dr. Jason Wood's contract was renewed for four years at the May 14 school board meeting.

Superintendent's contract renewed for four years

By Taylor Boyd

The Patrick County School Board unanimously approved renewing Schools Superintendent Dr. Jason Wood's contract at its Thursday, May 14 meeting.

Wood's contract was renewed for four years, the maximum amount of time allowed, starting July 1, 2026 until June 30, 2030.

Wood has served as superintendent since December 2021.

PCHS graduates told commencement marks 'end of the prologue'



The 165 graduates of Patrick County High School's Class of 2026 celebrated graduation with a cap toss, glitter bombs, and balloons.

By Taylor Boyd

The 165 graduates of the 56th Patrick County High School (PCHS) Commencement Exercise on Friday, May 22 were told that graduation was the final sentence in the prologue of their lives.

The words of wisdom were delivered to the Class of 2026 in the gymnasium where the ceremony was held due to inclement weather.

Student Government Association Vice President Callie Elizabeth Wood told the class that

"when deciding what to say to you all tonight, I did what I've done so regrettably often - I froze. I sat unsure in front of the computer the night of the deadline like we've done, completely paralyzed by this decision."

Because she was afraid of choosing the wrong words, Wood said she found herself unable to decide, "but that's when I realized we've all struggled with choice, indecision, and fears of regrets. We all face uncertainty, and some of us might be facing it right now."

Patrick County declares drought watch amid ongoing dry conditions

Patrick County officials declared a drought watch last week following prolonged dry weather conditions that have affected regional water supplies.

County Administrator Michael McGuinness issued the declaration on Thursday, May 21.

It will remain in effect until conditions improve and county officials, in consultation with the Patrick County Public Service Authority and the Patrick County Board of Supervisors, determine the water shortage has ended.

To read more about these and other stories, check out The Enterprise, www.theenterprise.net.



Lester Harrell, of the Peters Creek District, resigned from the Patrick County School Board effective May 31. Harrell served on the school board for two years.

School Board Bids Farewell to Vice Chairman Lester Harrell

By Taylor Boyd

The Patrick County School Board reluctantly accepted Vice-chairman Lester Harrell's resignation at the Thursday, May 14 meeting.

Harrell's resignation will be effective May 31. He served on the board for two years.

Chairman Amy Walker, of the Mayo River District, read Harrell's resignation letter before the board accepted his resignation.

"It has been an honor to serve the citizens of Patrick County in this role. I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside fellow board members, administrators, and staff in support of our students, schools, and community. This decision comes as I transition into a new professional role that will require my full attention and commitment," Walker read.

Virginia to offer nutrient management training in June, July

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Nutrient Management Program will offer a two-part agriculture nutrient management training school in June and July of 2026. The school is for anyone interested in learning about the development of agricultural nutrient management plans or how to become a certified plan writer.

The first session, June 15-16, 2026, is a lecture series by Virginia Tech professors on soil science, soil fertility and crop production. The second session, July 7-9, 2026, will cover nutrient management plan writing using a case-study farm.

Both sessions of the series will be hosted online. Each day would run from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Registration is \$150 for each session. Sign-up deadline for the soil and crop training is

June 8, 2026, and sign-up deadline for the plan writing training is June 30, 2026. Registration is available online at www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/nmtrain.

Nutrient management continues to be an important factor in a farmer's decision-making process when considering application of materials to supply nutrients to crops. Nutrient management plans determine rates for applying manure, fertilizers, biosolids and other soil amendments so that crop yields are maximized, and nutrient loss to and ground and surface waters is minimized. Application rates are determined by a process using actual yield records or soil productivity when yield records aren't available.

Contact Stephanie Dawley at 804-382-3911 or Stephanie.Dawley@dcr.virginia.gov for additional details.

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 <p>hollywoodcinema.net 1-3-5-7-9</p>	 <p>1-4-7-9:15</p>	 <p>1-3-5-7-9</p>	 <p>1-3-5-7-9</p>	 <p>1-3-5-7-9</p>	 <p>9PM tickets \$5 near Walmart Martinsville 276-656-3456</p>
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PUZZLE TIME

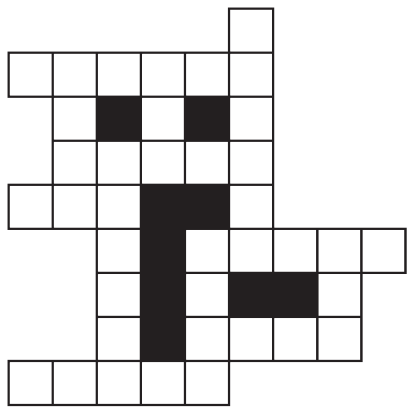


FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

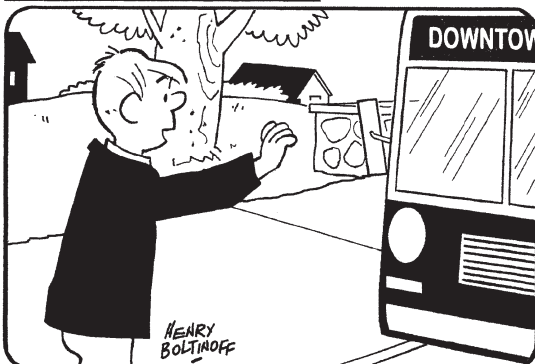
- AWG
- LODENO
- IYFRE
- ♥ARLI
- OTGTRO
- DRI
- ♥RYDA
- TOIGN
- ♥ORF
- ♥WROFEL
- ♥WRYDO
- ♥DEAW



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

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Mirror is longer. 2. Arm is lower. 3. Nose is different. 4. Windshield shape is different. 5. Windshield wiper is added. 6. Bush is missing.

MAGIC MAZE • A LATE ENDING

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

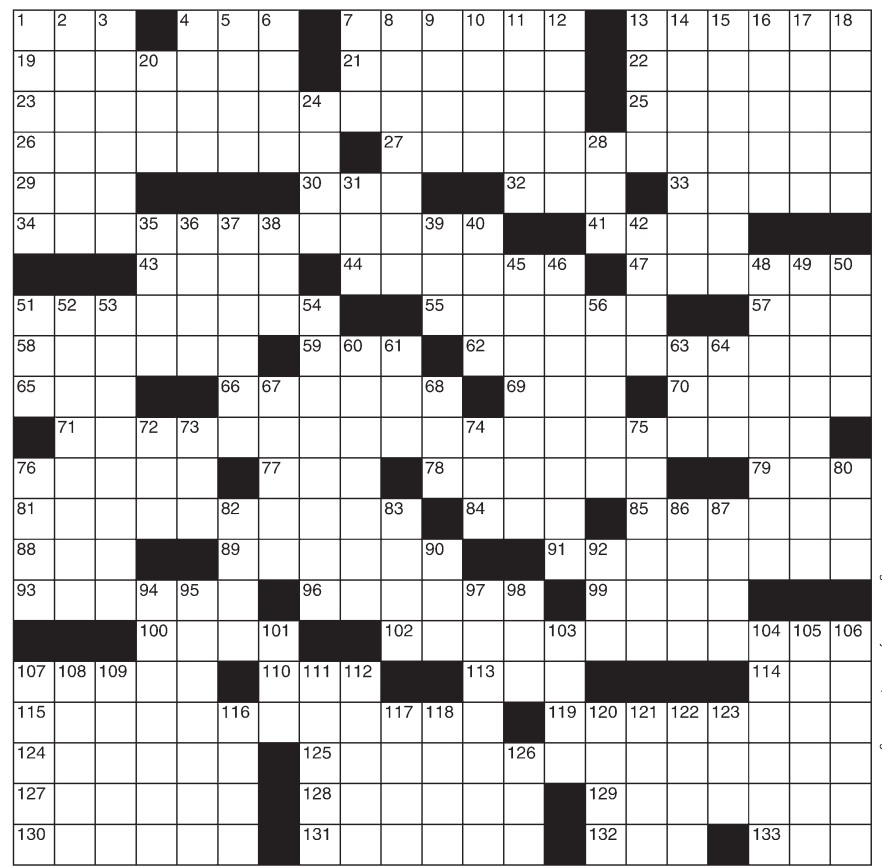
Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: TO EXPAND WITH AIR

- Accumulate
- Chocolate
- Collate
- Conflate
- Correlate
- Deflate
- Emulate
- Insulate
- Isolate
- Palate
- Plate
- Regulate
- Simulate
- Slate
- Violate

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Super Crossword

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>ACROSS</p> <p>1 PlayStation 3 competitor</p> <p>4 Prefix for "bird"</p> <p>7 Man-to-man term of endearment</p> <p>13 Luau skirt</p> <p>19 Native (to)</p> <p>21 Modern way to shop</p> <p>22 Neckwear clasp</p> <p>23 Noteworthy septet of piers?</p> <p>25 Spanish fleet</p> <p>26 Worship</p> <p>27 Publicly revealing Edison's secret?</p> <p>29 Bottom-row PC key</p> <p>30 Recipe qty.</p> <p>32 Overly</p> <p>33 Eggs' shapes</p> <p>34 Successfully trap a moray?</p> <p>41 Shrek is one</p> <p>43 "There oughta be —!"</p> <p>44 Dozing</p> <p>47 Spellbound</p> <p>51 "This works like a charm!"</p> <p>55 Up-to-the-minute</p> <p>57 Director Ang</p> | <p>58 Like family-friendly films</p> <p>59 Pres. after FDR</p> <p>62 Bring a Ferris wheel to a complete stop?</p> <p>65 Scrape (by)</p> <p>66 Charlotte —, Virgin Islands</p> <p>69 Internet ID</p> <p>70 TV host</p> <p>71 Philbin</p> <p>71 Like a king who has wild mood swings?</p> <p>76 Burns a little</p> <p>77 Army NCO</p> <p>78 Teensy bit</p> <p>79 Noted period</p> <p>81 Ruling eagle sitting in her high nest?</p> <p>84 Org. giving tows</p> <p>85 Iridescent button</p> <p>88 Architect I.M. from China</p> <p>89 "Avengers: Age of —"</p> <p>91 Government revenue sources</p> <p>93 Ukraine port</p> <p>96 Basketry willows</p> | <p>97 Shout</p> <p>100 Mask</p> <p>102 Wish you had never met the star of "Firestarter"?</p> <p>107 Curved</p> <p>110 — Fridays (restaurant)</p> <p>113 Bank acct. amount</p> <p>114 Uncooked</p> <p>115 Response to a question about "Swan Lake"?</p> <p>119 1996 #1 hit for Los del Rio</p> <p>124 Funnel-shaped bloom</p> <p>125 People with unorthodox opinions about a girl in Wonderland?</p> <p>127 Quick raids</p> <p>128 Cringed</p> <p>129 Sugar alcohol used as a sweetener</p> <p>130 Tiny amounts</p> <p>131 Goes hastily</p> <p>132 From — Z</p> <p>133 Pop/soul singer Des'—</p> | <p>DOWN</p> <p>1 Floor cleaner for liquid spills, in brief</p> | <p>D-PARTING</p> <p>2 Suffering, figuratively</p> <p>3 —Kit (police face-maker)</p> <p>4 Part of ACLU: Abbr.</p> <p>5 — voce</p> <p>6 "High Rollers" rapper</p> <p>7 See</p> <p>109-Down</p> <p>8 With the wish (of)</p> <p>9 Actress</p> <p>10 Encircled with a band</p> <p>11 Not suitable</p> <p>12 Like many simple questions</p> <p>13 TDs or RBI</p> <p>14 Loud warning device</p> <p>15 Eliminator</p> <p>16 Former first lady Michelle</p> <p>17 Rafael of tennis</p> <p>18 Lawn surface</p> <p>20 Suffix of nationalities</p> <p>24 Amsterdam is its cap.</p> <p>28 Sticky gunk</p> <p>31 Island setting</p> <p>35 Appellation</p> <p>36 Dressed</p> <p>37 Bible book before Zechariah</p> <p>38 Prefix with light</p> <p>39 Pipe joint</p> <p>40 Foliage unit</p> <p>42 Stan of jazz</p> <p>45 Region of pre-Roman Italy</p> <p>46 Viewed intently</p> <p>48 Some wheel adjusters</p> <p>49 Animal's "family tree"</p> <p>50 Golf pegs</p> <p>51 Deep anger</p> <p>52 Pay attention</p> <p>53 Sault —, Mich.</p> <p>54 Replace with</p> <p>56 Bud of Cooperstown</p> <p>60 Some roofing specialists</p> <p>61 Up to, in brief</p> <p>63 Suffix with southwest</p> <p>64 Outdoor gear retailer</p> <p>67 Large city in Iraq</p> <p>68 Raised RFs</p> <p>72 "Either he goes — go!"</p> <p>73 Mao — -tung</p> <p>74 Diva Sumac</p> <p>75 Boomer's kid</p> <p>76 Mafia chief</p> <p>80 Horse cousin</p> <p>82 Campus area</p> <p>83 Film genre</p> <p>86 Skillfully</p> <p>87 Tranquil</p> <p>90 Modern, in Munich</p> <p>92 Scottish port</p> <p>94 Varnish resin</p> <p>95 Judy glance</p> <p>97 Make more offspring</p> <p>98 Govt. loan agency</p> <p>101 LAX guess</p> <p>103 — mater</p> <p>104 Collier's tram</p> <p>105 Really bug</p> <p>112 Town on Long Island's South Shore</p> <p>116 Russian news agency</p> <p>117 Chablis, e.g.</p> <p>118 Ovid's "Lo!"</p> <p>120 Brand of athletic shoes</p> <p>121 "— la vie"</p> <p>122 Slangy suffix with buck</p> <p>123 Cup edge</p> <p>126 ER staffers</p> |
|---|---|---|---|---|



Weekly SUDOKU

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

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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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- In 1960, the average life expectancy of a person with Down syndrome was 10 years. By 2007, the average had risen to 47 years.
- The world's oldest emergency phone number is the U.K.'s 999 number, introduced on June 30, 1937.
- Snakes evolved from a four-legged reptilian ancestor, probably a small, burrowing, land-bound lizard, approximately 100 million years ago. Some, such as pythons and boas, still have traces of back legs.
- Jupiter contracts by about 2 centimeters per year as it radiates internal heat into space.
- The Zimbabwean dollar bank note holds the record for the greatest number of zeros shown (100,000,000,000,000).
- During the Middle Ages, people tried a number of ways to cure the black plague, including avoiding bad thoughts, eating and drinking in moderation, and not abusing the poor.
- The five-second rule is, sadly, a myth, since bacteria can live after four weeks on carpet.
- In 1946, two partners in a leading pest control company were tried by a British military court, convicted and hanged on genocide charges, the argument being that they must have realized the amount of Zyklon B they provided to concentration camps far exceeded that needed for delousing.
- The Greek dramatist Menander once wrote that, "No chaste woman ought to make her hair yellow." Guess he preferred brunettes.
- If the U.S. Army were a city, it would be the 10th largest in the country, having more people than popular cities such as San Francisco; Jacksonville, Florida; and Austin, Texas.
- Warm Dr Pepper was once a popular Christmas drink and even thought to aid colds and other ailments.
- The Statue of Liberty is made of more than 300 layers of copper.

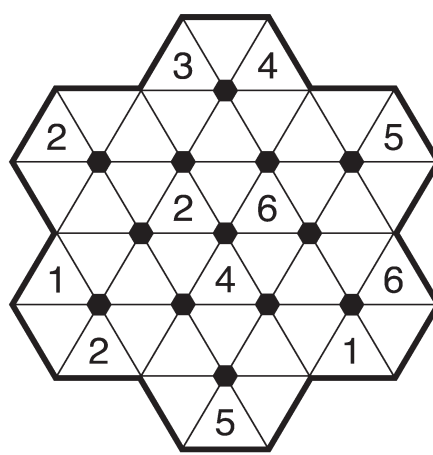
 Thought for the Day: "There are three constants in life ... change, choice and principles." — Stephen Covey

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SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

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



DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

- ♦ Easy
- ♦♦ Medium
- ♦♦♦ Difficult

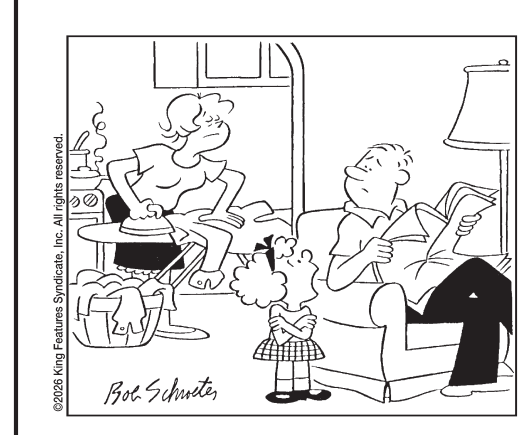
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SCRAMBLERS

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

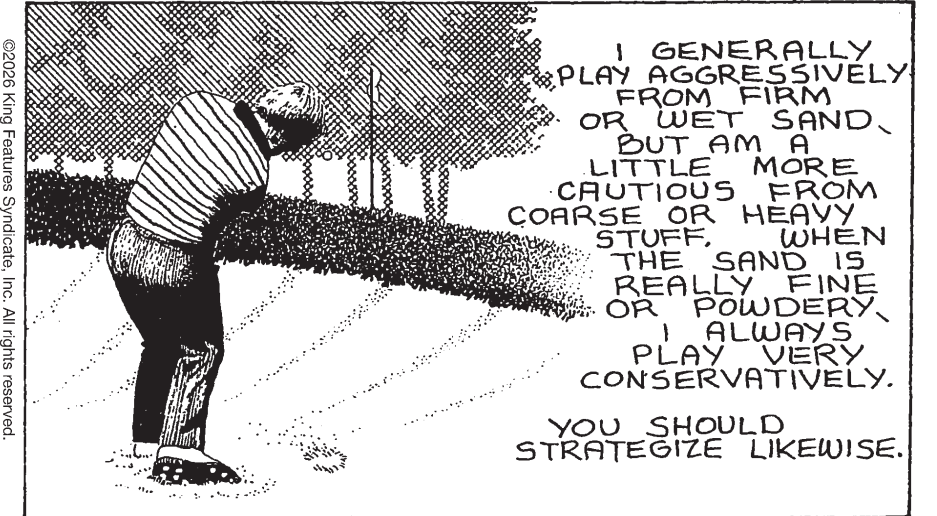
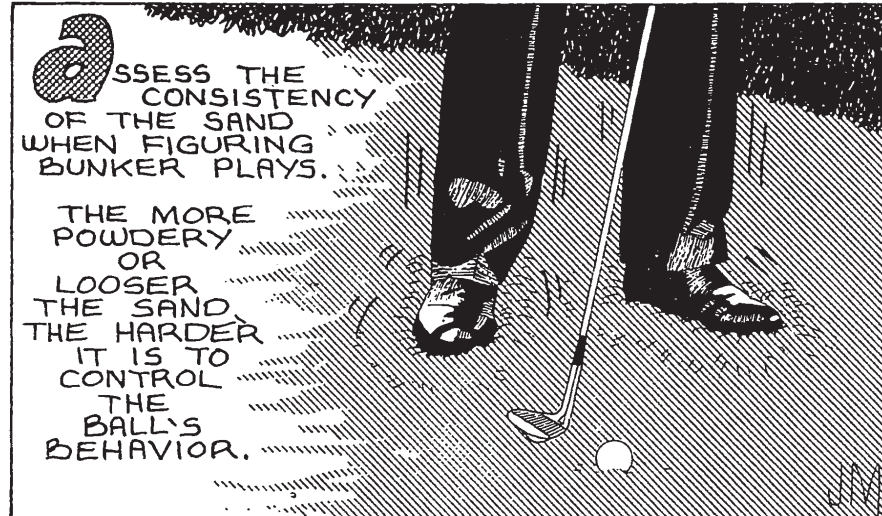
- Honest: ROMAL
- Reduced: KNURSH
- Village: LATHEM
- Groan: ACKER

TODAY'S WORD



"Tell me, Daddy, how much an hour does a _____ get?"

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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Martinsville schools recognize top academic achievers



Superintendents Awardees with Dr. Talley and Dr. Dixon.

Martinsville City Public Schools recently honored its 2026 Superintendent's Award recipients during a recognition breakfast held Friday, May 15, at Chatmoss Country Club.

The Superintendent's Award is the highest academic honor presented by MCPS and recognizes students who have earned a cumulative GPA of 4.0 or higher.

During the ceremony, each student received a cord to wear during graduation in recognition of their outstanding academic achievement.

This year's keynote speaker was Martinsville High School alum Jyshir Plunkett ('25), who encouraged the seniors to recognize the dedica-

tion and perseverance that led to their success.

"Your success did not happen by accident," Plunkett told students. "You did not arrive at this moment by luck alone. Your achievements are the product of discipline, resilience, prayer, support, and determination."

Plunkett acknowledged that each student reached this milestone through different experiences and challenges, while emphasizing the importance of persistence and character.

"The challenges you faced did not simply test your intelligence, they developed your character, and character will take you places that talent alone cannot," he said.

LEGAL

COUNTY OF HENRY REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings has been scheduled for **June 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia. Following these public hearings, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on each application to the Board of Supervisors.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct public hearings on the following applications on **June 23, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Summerlin Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, Kings Mountain Rd, Collinsville, Virginia.

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

Case R-26-11 Bobby Taylor

The property is located on the north west corner of the intersection of Fairystone Park Hwy and Blackberry Rd in the Blackberry District and is shown on Tax Map 15.8/121. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 5.676-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Commercial District B-1. The applicant intends to construct RV/boat storage units.

Case R-26-12 Ashlee Mullis

The property is located on the west side of A.L. Philpott Hwy, approximately 350' north of Andra Dr in the Ridgeway District and is shown on Tax Map 62.7/57,36B,36C. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 1.726-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R and Agricultural District A-1 to Commercial District B-1. The applicant intends to market the property for commercial uses.

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

Lee H. Clark, AICP

Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

He also encouraged students to use their talents and influence to positively impact their communities and those around them.

"Be people of integrity. Be people of compassion. Be people who uplift others instead of tearing them down. And never become so successful that you forget how to be kind," Plunkett said.

The following students earned the Superintendent's Award — Jemea Leshay, Craghead Kamori Re Yanna Dillard, Zaniah Ariana Dillard, Jahrine Ezekiel Jones, Aerran Elysia Kellam, Jun Hermes Olea, and Kaira Merci Womack.

DelShana LeGrant, 3rd Bay Café to be honored with Clyde Hooker Awards



DelShana LeGrant is the recipient of a 2026 Clyde Hooker Award, given by Piedmont Arts to honor supporters of the arts in Martinsville and Henry County.



Kourtney Merricks is the recipient of the 2026 Arts in Education Award, given by Piedmont Arts to honor outstanding arts educators in Martinsville and Henry County.



Yvonne Givens, co-owner of 3rd Bay Café. The restaurant is the recipient of a 2026 Clyde Hooker Award, given by Piedmont Arts to honor supporters of the arts in Martinsville and Henry County.

Piedmont Arts will honor DelShana LeGrant and 3rd Bay Café for their support of the arts at the 24th Annual Clyde Hooker Awards on Tuesday, June 2, at Piedmont Arts. The ceremony will begin promptly at 5:30 p.m. with a reception to follow.

The museum will also recognize Arts in Education Award recipient Kourtney Merricks and the recipients of the Nicodemus Hufford and Harold Knowlton Work Memorial Art Scholarships.

Guests should RSVP attendance by Friday, May 29, to 276-632-3221 or online at PiedmontArts.org. There is no admission cost, but donations to the scholarship fund are appreciated. Donations may be made at the event or online.

About DelShana LeGrant

LeGrant is a dedicated ambassador for Piedmont Arts. She served on the museum's Board of Directors from 2020-2025 and as board president from 2023-2024. She is an active member of the Strategic Planning Committee, helping to guide the museum's future growth and impact. She has also served as a judge for Dancing for the Arts, volunteered at numerous events, and tirelessly advocates for the importance of the arts in the community.

In addition to the arts, she is passionate about childhood education, community service, and social justice-based initiatives. She serves as a special education regional consultant for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. She is also an education consultant at Hines-Gaither Consulting LLC, a diversity, equity, and inclusion education consultant at Kaplan Early Learning Company, and the owner of LeGrant Education Services LLC. She serves on the boards of

the Harvest Foundation and Patrick & Henry Community College. She is the past president of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Kappa Delta Omega Chapter, and remains actively involved in numerous community service initiatives. She holds a master's degree in education from Averett University and a doctorate in education from Liberty University.

"DelShana uses her passion for the arts and childhood education to inspire her community," said Executive Director Heidi Pinkston. "She helps create opportunities for young minds to grow and explore creativity. Her commitment to the arts leaves a lasting impact that will benefit our community for generations."

About 3rd Bay Café

3rd Bay Café is a family-owned restaurant that offers a fine-dining experience and serves as a hub for community engagement in Martinsville. Co-owner Yvonne Givens and her team have been supporting Piedmont Arts for nearly 20 years by sponsoring events, providing catering, and participating in events such as Savory September. Earlier this year, longtime employee Al Herndon and his teammate Melissa White took home the grand prize at Dancing for the Arts, a fundraiser that raised more than \$90,000 for Piedmont Arts. 3rd Bay's support of the event was instrumental in making the biennial fundraiser a success.

"3rd Bay isn't just a place to eat," said Pinkston. "It's a cornerstone of the community. By sponsoring various local events, supporting the museum's fundraisers, and much more, they uplift local organizations and create a sense of belonging for everyone they serve."

About Kourtney Merricks

Merricks is passionate about the arts and arts education. She has worked closely with Piedmont Arts over the past two years, teaching art classes for homeschool students of all ages. She is a native of Figsboro, Virginia, and a graduate of Fieldale-Collinsville High School. She holds a bachelor's degree in theatre from James Madison University. After college, she worked at a summer theater camp in Long Island, New York, an experience she credits with igniting her creative passion.

"Arts education is at the core of our mission at Piedmont Arts," said Programs Coordinator Jennifer Gravely. "Kourtney shares that value. Her passion for the arts is evident in all that she does for her students. We've watched her classes grow, and we've seen the student art she proudly displays in the Foster Gallery. Her students adore her, and the lessons and experiences she's providing them are priceless and commendable."

About the Nicodemus Hufford Memorial Arts Scholarship

Named in honor of famed portrait artist Nicodemus "Nick" Hufford, this scholarship supports graduating high school seniors who are residents of or attend a school located in Martinsville or Henry County, and who are pursuing a degree in the visual or performing arts at an accredited four-year institution.

Caesar Draper is the recipient of this year's scholarship. He is a 2026 graduate of Martinsville High School, where he was on the honor roll and a two-time recipient of the Big M Award. He has starred in many school and community theater productions. He is an active

community volunteer with organizations such as the Dan River Basin Association, the Red Cross, and local food drives.

He will attend North Carolina Central University in the fall, where he plans to major in the performing arts. After graduation, he hopes to embark on a career in the theater industry and serve as a mentor to young performers, helping them to build confidence and discover their creative potential.

About the Harold Knowlton Work Memorial Arts Scholarship

Established by Julia Ascough Work in memory of her late husband, Harold Knowlton Work, this scholarship supports rising college sophomores, juniors, and seniors who graduated from a high school located in Martinsville or Henry County, and who are pursuing a degree in the visual or performing arts at an accredited four-year institution.

Carina Fiona Aquilo, George Louque, and Lauralee Robinson are the recipients of this year's scholarships.

Aquilo is a homeschool graduate. She is a studio art major in the School of Visual Arts at Virginia Tech. She views her artistic practice as a way to bring light into difficult spaces, not only for herself, but for others who may need it. After graduation, she plans to pursue a path that combines freelance art, travel, and community-building, with the long-term goal of creating a platform to support independent artists.

Louque is a graduate of Magna Vista High School. He is a communication arts major in the School of the Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University. After graduation, he plans to become a concept artist focusing on character design, atmosphere building, and storytelling.

Robinson is a graduate of Magna Vista High School. She is pursuing a double major in theater and theater education at Roanoke College. She has been acting in school and community productions since middle school, and credits Magna Vista Theater Director Bryan Dunn with inspiring her to pursue a career in the performing arts. In college, she has been recognized for her outstanding acting, receiving an award nomination for her role in "Little Women the Musical" from the American College Theatre Festival. After graduation, she hopes to open a children's theater to inspire and encourage a passion for acting in future generations.

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Carlisle

(cont. from page 1)



Carlisle School's Class of 2026 prepares to enter graduation despite a power outage.

about 10 other students joined them along the way, bringing new energy, perspectives, and friendships that became lasting bonds.

"You became one united class committed in the bonds, not by when you started, but what you

built together - a class united, a class committed, a class of achievers. The traditions and spirit of the school have been woven throughout your time here, whether it's gathering in the student lounge, celebrating at homecoming, watch-

ing the sunrise together at the beginning of the year, or the sunset close at the end of the year, these moments signify your experience and connected you to one another, and now your graduation with the lights off connected you even more," Meyer said.

Valedictorian Dylan Victoria Spencer said as many people know, she's been counting down the days to graduation essentially since she began high school.

"I've been so excited to start a new chapter...that many times I would think to myself, 'I just have to make it to graduation.' However, as this year's coming to a close I found myself going back to all of the happy memories that I've had throughout my time here," she said.

While her high school experience has had its ups and downs, Spencer said she's grateful for everything that's happened.

"Because regardless of how it made me feel in the moment, I have learned and grown. This chapter of my story is one that I am very proud of because of it," she

said.

When she started high school, Spencer said she hated public speaking so much that she couldn't even read a short story aloud in class. While the nerves are still present, Spencer said she now feels confident and comfortable speaking in front of the audience.

"Michael Josephson said it well when he stated: 'Take pride in how far you've come. Have faith in how far you can go. But don't forget to enjoy the journey.' All of us are about to close this chapter of our lives and begin a new chapter that will be drastically different from anything that we've experienced before. I don't say this with anxiety or stress, I say it with excitement and anticipation. I've learned the importance of living in the moment because you never know what will happen in the future," she said.

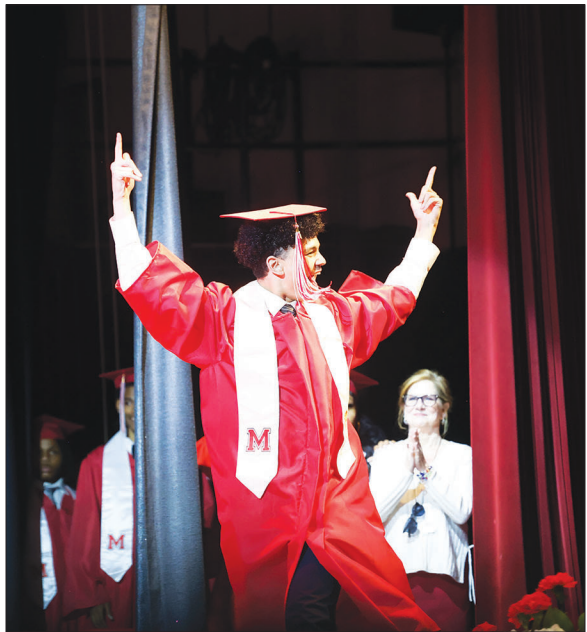
While she often found herself wishing life could hurry up while in high school so she could move on and start something new, Spencer said looking back she now wishes she had a few more minutes to make some memories.

Class

(cont. from page 1)



Relatives and friends packed the auditorium, cheering graduates as they received their diplomas.



Members of the Class of 2026 celebrated at the commencement ceremony.

years, they're going to fly by," he said. "And lowkey it just sounded like people repeating the same thing over and over. But from 9th grade to now, the understanding started to hit me more and more and I finally get what they meant."

Moore reminded graduates that earning a diploma represents both accomplishment and opportunity.

"Reminiscing on those memories we can now look forward to our futures. Getting this diploma means a lot, especially today. Your high school diploma is needed in almost all job fields," he said.

"Now we are free to do what we want with our lives. Everyone here is starting a new chapter whether it's going to college, the military or joining the workforce."

He also reflected on the celebrations that traditionally follow graduation ceremonies.

"Graduation weekends are always filled with cookouts, parties, and family outings. We're not just celebrating the season, we're celebrating ourselves. All the work, all the memories, everything it took to get to this moment," Moore said.

Quoting scripture, he concluded, "Remember Colossians 3:23: Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men. Class of

2026, we made it!"

Dillard focused her remarks on the shared experiences and challenges members of the class overcame together.

"These aren't just classmates. These are people who walked the same halls as you, who showed up on the same hard days, who pushed through the same pressure, expectations, and challenges," Dillard said.

"These are people who understand what it took to get here because they lived it too."

She also referenced the stress and uncertainty students often faced throughout high school.

"Through tests we studied for, tests we tried to study for, and moments where we sat there like, 'It is what it is at this point.' And somehow, some way, we're here," she said.

Dillard acknowledged that many students faced difficulties beyond academics.

"The truth is, our journey wasn't always easy. For many of us, success didn't come with perfect conditions. We had responsibilities outside of school. We had moments where we felt overlooked, underestimated, or unsure of what was next," she said.

"Some of us had to grow up a little faster than we should have. But we're still here."

Dillard reminded graduates that reaching commencement was an achievement they earned.

"We didn't just make it to graduation, we earned it," she said. "And along the way, we became more than just students. We became leaders, creators, teammates, and problem-solvers."

As graduates prepare for different futures, Dillard said there is no single definition of success.

"Some of us have a clear plan. Some of us are still figuring it out. And that's okay. There is no one path to success," she said.

"Whether you're going to college, starting a career, pursuing a passion, or still discovering what's next ... your path is valid."

Dillard concluded by encouraging classmates to believe in themselves as they move into the next stage of life.

"Walk into every room knowing you belong there. Speak with confidence. Move with purpose. And never shrink yourself to fit into spaces that weren't built with you in mind," she said.

"Class of 2026, we are not just leaving with diplomas. We're leaving with stories, with strength, and with the ability to build something greater than what we started with."

Co-digester converts farm byproducts, local organic waste to biogas and fertilizer at multigenerational dairy

Turning organic waste into clean energy was a futuristic idea that is now a real environmental solution in Virginia.

By diverting organic waste from landfills, Massachusetts-based Vanguard Renewables is reducing greenhouse gas emissions at scale while supporting domestic energy infrastructure and regenerative agriculture for U.S. farms. Their newest facility was recently commissioned at Oakmulgee Dairy Farm in Amelia Court House.

This site and two others in Wisconsin collectively accept almost 1,000 tons of food waste per day across three key U.S. markets, infusing the

grid system with enough energy to power industrial needs and tens of thousands of homes.

"We're taking organic waste that would otherwise end up in landfills across the region and leveraging industry-best technology to deliver carbon-negative, high-quality gas to the grid," said Mike O'Laughlin, CEO of Vanguard Renewables at the April 28 commissioning event.

Oakmulgee is Virginia's oldest continuously operated dairy farm, run by Larkin Moyer and his sons, Jeremy and Brandon. Vanguard Renewables approached them with a proposal for the site in 2022.

The farm offered the right operational foot-

print for the project, including a strong, established dairy operation, sufficient scale, proximity to a gas pipeline, and access to both agricultural and food waste streams.

For the Moyers, the project provides a long-term land lease that creates an income stream while supporting a more sustainable approach to manure management. The farm also receives natural fertilizer and bedding back at no cost, helping reduce operating expenses.

The amount produced will help "literally thousands of other acres of neighboring farms" with fertilizer needs, Moyer noted.

(See Byproducts p. 12)

Graduates

(cont. from page 1)



Candid moments before and after the ceremony.

"Throughout the years we have been in school, we have been shaped by countless moments that would influence our lives forever. From walking into an unfamiliar kindergarten class

and leaving your parents on for the first time, to talking to a stranger who sits next to you in the class or even crying at the kitchen table when you got your parents help with homework because

you were taught a different way from how they were taught," Goad said.

"These moments did more than just create memories. They shaped who we are and taught us lessons that we will carry with us for years to come," he added.

Goad also spoke about what it means to be a Bassett Bengal.

"The Bengal, our mascot, is supposed to represent fearlessness, independence. While being a Bassett Bengal does need to be fearless, being a bingo has not taught me independence, instead taught me the vulnerability of being dependent," he said.

"I was an only child for the first 12 years of my life. Being independent was all that I knew when I came to Bassett High School. I was quick to shut people out and prefer to do things on my own. And now that I'm at the finish line with my high school journey, I can say with certainty that I would not have made

it without being dependent on others."

He described shared experiences among classmates, including friendships formed in classrooms and cafeterias.

"You see, being a Bengal means relying on each other, always, because people need people. When we keep our eyes focused on Riverside Drive, we see family," Goad said.

Cooley encouraged graduates to remember the experiences that connected them during their years at Bassett High School.

"We have shared time together in the classroom, on the field or court, on school trips, all learning our places. Pass it Bengals, but now we will start our new lives as college students, workers serving our country," she said.

"Even as we enter into these new roles in life, we must remember where we started. Bassett High School will always hold a special place in our hearts."

Magna

(cont. from page 1)



Filing into the gymnasium, the Class of 2026 prepares to sit together for the last time.



Graduates waited to be called to receive their diplomas.



Diplomas are awarded.

Griffin said high school was about more than academics or achievements.

"The late-night study sessions, in practices after school, in quiet moments of doubt, and in laughter echoing through the hallways. High school wasn't just about grades or trophies. It was about trying to find our path in the middle of uncertainty," he said.

Describing himself as someone who often stayed out of the spotlight, Griffin said he learned valuable lessons through observation.

"For those who know me, you know I'm not the loudest person in the room. I'm not the one constantly in the spotlight. Spending time in the silence taught me something valuable — it taught me to observe," he said.

"I've watched classmates support each other through hard days. I've seen friendships form between people who once felt like strangers. I've seen growth happen in ways that don't always make headlines, but matter deeply."

Griffin encouraged classmates to continue searching for meaning and purpose in the years ahead.

"As we move forward, some of us will find new treasures. Some of us will rediscover ones we didn't realize we already had. And some of us may still be searching. Whether you've found yours yet or not,

know this: it is within you," he said.

"May we protect our treasure. May we grow it. And may we use it to leave the world better than we found it."

Student speaker Azlyn España-Becerra began her remarks in Spanish while thanking her parents for their sacrifices and support.

"Les quisiera darles las gracias por todo. Viniéron a este país sin nada y me dieron todo y mucho más," she said.

She later translated the remarks into English, telling the audience, "I would like to thank you both for everything. You came to this country with nothing and gave me everything and so much more."

España-Becerra reflected on expectations students often have about high school, comparing reality to depictions in movies.

"We walked into high school believing that it would be like the movies. That they would be filled with musical numbers and celebrations, and that everything would fall into place on its own," she said.

"Instead, we got something real. We got early mornings that we did not want to wake up for. Days when showing up felt like the hardest thing in the world."

She also reminded graduates that success looks different for everyone.

"Everyone's 'best' looks different," she said.

Referencing Winnie the Pooh, España-Becerra reflected on the emotions surrounding graduation and saying goodbye.

"As one of my favorite Pooh-Bears in the 100-acre woods said, 'How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard,'" she said.

Looking out at her classmates, España-Becerra said the moment marked the final time many of them would gather together in the same way.

"This is the last time we will all be in the same place, at the same time, as who we are right now," she said. "This is our very last time we are just 'us,' before the world pulls us into different directions."

España-Becerra urged graduates to remain proud of who they are and to carry the memories of high school with them into the future.

"Be proud, loudly and unapologetically, of who you are," she said.

"And wherever life takes you, I hope that you chase your dreams fearlessly. That you find a way to make your dreams your reality. If these past four years have proven anything, it is that you are so much more capable of what you think you are."

First Saturday Outing paddle set for June

Enjoy a late-spring outing with the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) during a First Saturday Outing paddle on the beautiful Mayo River. Participants will float approximately six miles from Anglin Mill's Mayo Beach to NC 770 near Stoneville, North Carolina.

Participants are asked to meet by 9:00 a.m. at Old Anglin Mill Road, downstream from Anglin Mill Bridge. During the outing, the group will float past portions of the Mayo River State Park. Coordinating the trip is Lucas Conkle, an avid paddler and river enthusiast.

"Beginning paddlers are invited to launch below Mayo Beach for a fairly easy float through mostly Class I waters," said Conkle. "There's one tricky rapid just upstream of the put-in that can be avoided by launching downstream from it."

Expert paddlers looking for more excitement will have the option of running the famous "Boiling Hole" and the "S-Turn" (also known as "Blender") before continuing with the remainder of the trip. Helmets are strongly recommended for anyone choosing to paddle the "Boiling Hole" section.

Otherwise, much of the excitement comes from navigating small rapids through several 1,000-year-old fish weirs created in the river by Native Americans and used by local residents until about 1900. These V-shaped stone fish weirs concentrated migrating fish at the point of the "V," making it possible to collect them in nets or baskets. Great spawning runs once came from the Atlantic Ocean, up the Roanoke and Dan Rivers, into the Mayo River and its tributaries, where fish laid their eggs before heading back downstream. For centuries, before dams halted the migrations, people living along the river made huge catches that fed communities and supported local livelihoods. Today, the fish weirs provide routes through shallow water and add to the uniqueness of the float.

Paddlers may also have the opportunity to observe habitat associated with the recent reintroduction efforts of the Roanoke logperch, a rare native fish species once thought to be disappearing from portions of the Dan and Mayo River systems. Conservation and restoration work in the Mayo River has helped support the return of



Photo by DRBA

this unique species and highlights the ecological importance of protecting clean, free-flowing waterways throughout the basin.

Portions of the land along this section of the river are part of North Carolina's Mayo River State Park. The Mayo River remains one of the region's greatest natural assets. Paddlers can enjoy the river's unspoiled beauty, forested banks, wildlife, birds, and few signs of civilization. Watch the riverbanks for blooming wildflowers along the water's edge. Layers of azalea, mountain laurel, and rhododendron climb the banks beneath a thick forest canopy. Songbirds migrating through the area or establishing nesting territory join waterfowl such as ducks, herons, and kingfishers along the route.

Participants are asked to bring:

*A boat suitable for river paddling

*A properly fitting life jacket

*Lunch and drinking water

*Clothing made of wool or quick-drying syn-

thetic materials

*A willingness to get wet

NOTE: All participants will be required to sign DRBA's waiver prior the event. If you have attended one of our FSO's in the past, you will be asked to initial your waiver on file.

Directions to the Put-In

From US 220 north of Stoneville, take the Smith Road (SR 1360) exit and turn west. Travel approximately four miles to the T-intersection with Anglin Mill Road (SR 1358). Turn left onto Anglin Mill Road and continue about one-half mile to within less than a mile of the Anglin Mill Bridge over the Mayo River. Turn left onto unpaved Old Anglin Mill Road (SR 1385). Continue one-half mile to the T-intersection with Mayo Beach Road (SR 1359).

GPS Coordinates: 36.528463, -79.989540

For more information about the outing, Trip Coordinator: Lucas Conkle / Email: l_conkle@hotmail.com.

Piedmont Arts goes solar with new roof-mounted array



A new solar array can be seen on the roof of Piedmont Arts. The 146-panel array will help offset the museum's carbon footprint by producing around 40% of its power.

Piedmont Arts is powering the arts sustainably with a new roof-mounted solar array.

The 146-panel array will help offset the museum's carbon footprint by producing around 40% of its power. Along with the impact of HVAC upgrades and LED lighting installed in 2023, the museum will see significantly reduced electrical expenses — its largest monthly operating cost — while helping sustain the arts and

the planet for future generations.

This project was a key component of the Growth and Restoration Campaign, which focused on strengthening the museum's long-term fiscal sustainability and allowing more of its resources to support exhibitions, arts education, and community programs.

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

Byproducts

(cont. from page 10)



Costs of base fertilizer ingredients have increased significantly due to geopolitical conflict.

"This will help ensure that the sixth generation has the opportunity to also run this farm," he said. "It can keep family farms in business for their next generations too, plus creating jobs in their communities."

Organic material processed by the digester can include fats, oils,

greases, food production byproducts and unsellable food products. That waste is diverted to the site through contracts with regional food processors and suppliers, where it's separated from packaging that is later recycled.

The mixture of dairy manure and food waste is processed in a sealed, oxygen-free environment. Resulting gas is captured and upgraded to renewable natural gas, which is delivered to homes, businesses and large corporations—creating a fully circular system.

These sites were commissioned through a joint venture with TotalEnergies, joining Vanguard Renewables' expertise in organics recycling and biomethane production with TotalEnergies' global energy-development capabilities. Renewable natural gas from these facilities powers AstraZeneca's U.S. operations through one the largest corporate offtake agreements in the U.S.

See the full story this fall in September's Virginia Farm Bureau News magazine.



Church hosts 'Bassett Blast' community event

Mount Hermon Church of the Brethren hosted the Bassett Blast on Sunday, May 24, with free food, music and a fireworks show to kick off the summer.

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