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HENRY COUNTY ENTERPRISE

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County schools among nine divisions with gains in reading, math

Henry County Public Schools was one of nine Virginia school divisions to show gains of at least three percentage points in both reading and mathematics on the 2025-26 Standards of Learning assessments, according to results released Tuesday by the Virginia Department of Education.

The initial results reflect continued academic progress across the division, according to HCPS.

"This is an accomplishment worth celebrating," Superintendent Amy Blake-Lewis said. "To be one of only nine divisions in Virginia demonstrating this level of improvement in both reading and mathematics speaks to the tremendous work happening in our classrooms."

Blake-Lewis credited teachers, school leaders and students for the improvement.

"Our teachers and school leaders have remained focused on improving instruction, responding to student needs, and ensuring that our students continue to grow," she said. "Most importantly, our students have risen to the challenge, and I am incredibly proud of them."

The division attributed the gains in part to its RISE 2030 strategic plan, which provides a framework for instructional improvement, supportive learning environments, personnel development and family and community partnerships.

Blake-Lewis said the results reflect the efforts of the entire school division.

"Our teachers are doing the critical work every day in classrooms, supported by principals, instructional staff, support personnel, families, our School Board, and community partners," she said.

The superintendent also said the SOL results are only one measure of school performance.

The Virginia Department of Education is expected to release additional data and final determinations through the state's School Performance and Support Framework and federal accountability requirements.

"We are excited about what these initial results tell us, but our work continues," Blake-Lewis said. "We will celebrate this progress, examine where students still need additional support, and continue challenging ourselves to do better."

The school system will provide additional information as the remaining accountability data are released by VDOE.

Bassett Pioneer finds digital home

By Jessica Dillon

Andrew Doss has finally found a digital home for precious memories from the Bassett Furniture Company. He has long been digitizing documents from the company, especially from the Bassett Pioneer, an old newsletter about the company. With the help of colleague Michael Taylor, the duo has helped photos and articles find a permanent home on the internet.

Doss felt that joining Bassett Furniture in 2017 was more than a career move. He is a fourth-generation employee and local historian. When he arrived, he was curious about what records he could find of the rest of his family.

Early on, a talk with the human resources department pointed him toward something he hadn't expected. Tucked away in an old file cabinet was a drawer full of the Bassett Pioneer, a corporate newsletter that started in 1962, ran

(See Bassett p. 10)

United Way seeks volunteers for 28th Day of Action

By Jessica Dillon

More than 500 hours of volunteer work are available through this year's United Way of Henry County and Martinsville Day of Action, and organizers are hoping at least 100 people will sign up to help.

The 28th annual Day of Action will be held Friday, Sept. 18, with volunteers working on projects throughout Martinsville and Henry County.

"We already have a generally good bunch of folks around here. So, we're looking for more folks. There's plenty of opportunity. We're not feeling the group of lack of volunteers so much, but we do have over 500 hours of volunteer opportunity to fill in one day. So the more the merrier, we hope to have 100 folks at least come out," said Rebecca Conter, workplace engagement and donor services coordinator for United Way of Henry County and Martinsville.

More than 150 volunteer opportunities are available through 12 projects and four item drives, according to the United Way.

This year marks the 28th Day of Action, which began locally in 1998.

(See United Way p. 11)



Volunteers worked to clear brush last year. (Contributed)



Participants prepared for the nearly two-hour Bikers for Babies ride benefiting the Pregnancy Care Center of MHC. (Contributed)

Bikers for Babies raises more than $9,500 for pregnancy center

By Jessica Dillon

The annual Bikers for Babies ride was held Aug. 22, raising more than $9,500 for the Pregnancy Care Center of MHC, with additional donations still being counted.

Riders gathered at the Pregnancy Center before taking to the road for the nearly two-hour ride, which concluded at Rich Acres Fire Station on Joseph Martin Highway. Participants then shared a meal prepared and served by several members of the fire department.

Organizer Patrick Rusmisel said the event had a good turnout despite questionable weather.

"We had a good turnout on Saturday. The

(See Bikers p. 12)

Stair climb honors 9/11 anniversary, raises funds for first responders

By Jessica Dillon

A local stair climb will mark the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks while raising money for volunteer fire departments and rescue squads in Henry County.

All Vets, a Henry County-based nonprofit, and the Henry County Sheriff's Office will hold the Henry County 9/11 Stair Climb Sept. 12 at Martinsville Speedway.

Participants will climb the equivalent of the Twin Towers — 110 flights, or 2,071 steps — on the speedway's grandstand.

All proceeds will benefit Henry County volunteer rescue squads and fire departments.

Careen Rodgers, an event organizer and public information officer for All Vets, has organized the stair climb for three years.

"We did it at Bassett High School the first year. We had maybe 35

(See Stair p. 11)

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‘Remix’ brings musical mashups to Theatreworks











The cast of “Remix: A Music Revue” performs a selection of fan-favorite songs. (Contributed)

By Jessica Dillon

“Remix: A Music Revue” brings together popular songs from across generations with a twist: Multiple songs are performed simultaneously, creating a concert-like experience for audiences.

The revue spans multiple genres and decades, with a mix of upbeat rock ’n’ roll songs and ballads.

“The music revue we started about 15 years ago has become enormously popular with Theatreworks audiences,” said Artistic Director Corbin Campbell. “There are several up-tempo rock and roll songs as well as ballads.”

Campbell said the way the songs are performed is what sets “Remix” apart from a traditional musical.

“The other thing that is unique about this music revue, and the reason it’s titled Remix, is that it’s not just one song. It’s songs being sung simultaneously,” Campbell said.

Audience feedback also helps shape future editions of the revue. Campbell said Theatreworks considers what audiences enjoy when selecting songs for future productions.

The production takes a more casual approach to costuming than many Theatreworks shows. Performers begin the revue in casual clothing, including black shirts, helping create a relaxed, concert-like atmosphere.

The cast and crew include singers, musicians and a production team working together to create the show.

The performance runs approximately two hours, including a brief intermission.

Tickets are $26.50. Performances are scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 27, at 7 p.m.; Friday, Aug. 28, at 7 p.m.; and Saturday, Aug. 29, at 7 p.m.

Theatreworks is located at 44 Franklin St. in Martinsville. Tickets can be purchased online or at the door. More information is available at Theatreworks’ website.



Rosalynn Arnold poses with her painting “Iris,” which won the People’s Choice Award in “Expressions 2026: America 250” at Piedmont Arts. (Contributed)

Arnold’s ‘Iris’ wins People’s Choice Award

Rosalynn Arnold’s painting “Iris” has been named the People’s Choice Award winner in “Expressions 2026: America 250,” following a vote that drew more than 100 participants.

The award was determined by exhibition visitors, who selected it from the 146 works by 84 artists that were on display. Arnold also won first place in the watercolor category for the same painting.

The strong voter turnout reflects the community’s enthusiasm for supporting and celebrating the creative talent showcased in this year’s exhibition.

Congratulations to Arnold on these well-deserved recognitions, and to all the artists whose work contributed to the success of “Expressions 2026: America 250.”

“Expressions” is an open-entry exhibition presented annually by Lynwood Artists and Piedmont Arts. The exhibit was sponsored by Visit-Martinsville, Brightspeed, Helen S. and Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust, Lynwood Artists, and What’s Your Sign.

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



Piedmont Arts to host talk about art looted during World War II

“Looted Art: An Opening Journey to Resolution,” a talk discussing art looted during World War II, will take place on Thursday, Sept. 24, at Piedmont Arts. A reception will be held at 6:30 p.m., and the talk will begin at 7 p.m.

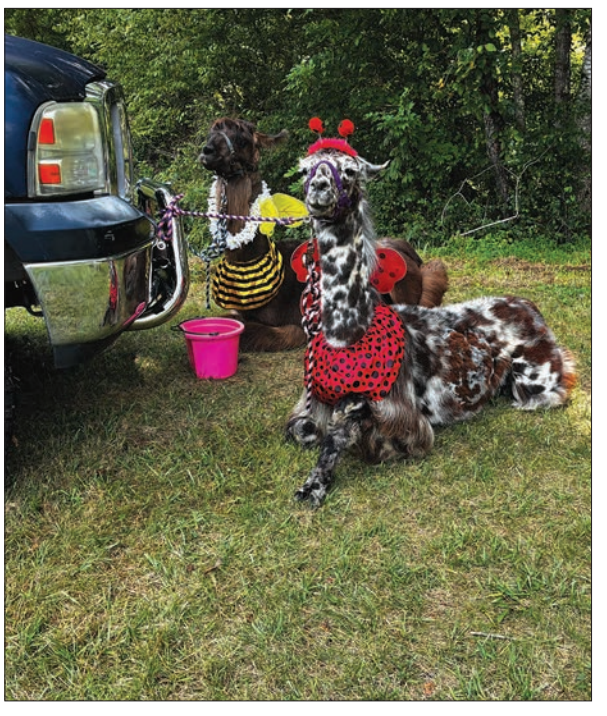
Issues of looted art and restitution are prevalent topics in art news and are important concerns for museums worldwide. In this talk, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Senior Manager of Provenance Research Karen Daly provides a historical overview of art looting and the museum community’s response. She also reflects on how recovery and restitution efforts have evolved to the present day, including a discussion of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts’ experiences resolving multiple art restitution claims.

This event is free and open to the public. RSVP by Wednesday, Sept. 23, to 276-632-3221 or at PiedmontArts.org.

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

Smith River Fest offered full day of activities





The Smith River Fest was held Aug. 22, featuring a full day of activities, including a river race, the annual Helgramite Mud Run, more than a dozen food trucks and more than 50 vendors. The event was planned by Henry County Parks and presented by Sovah Health.

Initial unemployment claims decrease

Virginia Works’ Economic Information and Analytics Division, which serves as the Commonwealth’s official source for labor market and workforce data, reported that that 2,391 unemployment insurance weekly initial claims were filed during the week ending August 15, 2026. This is 10.2 percent lower than last week’s 2,663 claims and 24.0 percent lower than the comparable week of last year (3,146).

The claims were filed with the Virginia Employment Commission, which administers the Commonwealth’s Unemployment Insurance program. Nearly 82 percent of claimants self-reported an employer which correlates to an associated industry. Based on this reporting, the top five industries (58 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (294); Health Care and Social Assistance (241); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (236); Retail Trade (192); and Accommodation and Food Services (147).

Continued weeks’ claims (20,548) were 0.3 percent lower than last week (20,613) and were 3.2 percent lower than the comparable week of last year (21,225). Nearly 93 percent of claimants self-reported an employer which correlates to an associated industry. Based on this reporting, the top five industries (59 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (3,662); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,399); Health Care and Social Assistance (2,036); Accommodation and Food Services (1,609); and Retail Trade (1,496).

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

Thursday, September 3
Henry County School Board Regular School Board Meeting - 5:30.m. Followed by Closed Session, Henry County Administration Building, 3rd Floor Boardroom, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.

Tuesday, September 8
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Municipal Building, 55 West Church St., Martinsville.

Tuesday, September 29
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Municipal Building, 55 West Church St., Martinsville.

Henry County Board of Supervisors meet at 3 and 6 p.m. in the Summerlin Room, Henry County Administration Building, 3300 King's Mountain Road, Martinsville.

Events

Friday, August 28
Exhibit Opening Reception, 5:30-7:30 p.m., at Piedmont Arts. The opening reception is in honor of new exhibits, "COLLECTive Concerns: Collage and Assemblage" and "Chris Gregson: Novus Ordo Seclorum." Complimentary refreshments will be served. Music by Joanie McPeak. This event is free and open to the public. RSVP by Wednesday, Aug. 26, to 276-632-3221 or online at PiedmontArts.org. These exhibits are sponsored by Katie and Jack Adkins, Lucy Coleman, Olivia and Pres Garrett, Gale and Will Gravely, Melody Margrave, Helen S. and Charles G. Patterson Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust, Lynwood Artists, and What's Your Sign.

Saturday, August 29
'Fight Like Jackie' Spaghetti Benefit Dinner, $15 per meal. All proceeds will support Jackie. Hosted by the Fieldale Fire Department, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., at Rangely Ruritan, 134 Calloway Dr., Fieldale.

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

Through Monday, Aug. 31
Henry County Commissioner of Revenue Tiffany R. Hairston and her office are participating in the 2026 Commissioners and Cans Food Drive. Every donation goes to the Patrick & Henry Community College Patriot Pantry. Canned meats, vegetables and other non perishable food items are requested. Drop off at the commissioner's office, Room 108, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville. Call the office, 276-634-4610, for more information.

Friday, September 4
Sounds on the Square with Rosebud Band, 7 – 10 p.m. Food and drinks will be available for purchase, and admission to the MHC Heritage Museum will be half price. The Floyd-based band draws inspiration from long-form improvisation. Rosebud stretches each tune into a living, breathing experience. Members are Ryan Thaw on bass, William Hairston on guitar, Colin Cospel on guitar, Blaine Kaiser on drums and Will Tillery on keyboards.

Sunday September 6
Open Mic/Jam Session, 2 to 4 p.m., at the Bassett Ruritan Club, 277 Philpott Dam Road, Bassett. Admission is free.

Tuesday, September 15
A Five-Star Stay For Bees, 1 p.m., at Patrick & Henry Community College Fab Lab. Help create a welcoming habitat for native bees and other pollinators. Build your own bee hotel and learn simple ways to support the pollinators that help our gardens, flowers, and communities thrive. A $10 supply fee is required at the time of registration. In-person registration required at Ridgeway Branch Library/Fab Lab, P&HCC Dalton Idea Center, 26 Fayette St., Martinsville.

Wednesday, September 16
A Five-Star Stay For Bees, 1 p.m., at Patrick & Henry Community College Fab Lab. Help create a welcoming habitat for native bees and other pollinators. Build your own bee hotel and learn simple ways to support the pollinators that help our gardens, flowers, and communities thrive. A $10 supply fee is required at the time of registration. In-person registration required at Collinsville Branch Library, to attend Fab Lab, P&HCC Dalton Idea Center, 26 Fayette St., Martinsville.

Thursday, September 17
A Five-Star Stay For Bees, 1 p.m., at Patrick & Henry Community College Fab Lab. Help create a welcoming habitat for native bees and other pollinators. Build your own bee hotel and learn simple ways to support the pollinators that help our gardens, flowers, and communities thrive. A $10 supply fee is required at the time of registration. In-person registration required at Bassett Branch Library, for event at Fab Lab, P&HCC Dalton Idea Center, 26 Fayette St., Martinsville.

Friday, September 18
A Five-Star Stay For Bees, 1 p.m., at Patrick & Henry Community College Fab Lab. Help create a welcoming habitat for native bees and other pollinators. Build your own bee hotel and learn simple ways to support the pollinators that help our gardens, flowers, and communities thrive. A $10 supply fee is required at the time of registration. In-person registration required at Martinsville Main Library, event at Fab Lab, P&HCC Dalton Idea Center, 26 Fayette St., Martinsville.

Savory September: 6:30-9:30 p.m., at Piedmont Arts. Big city flavors meet small town charm at this New York-themed fundraiser for the arts. Admission tickets are $65 per person and include food and drinks. 50/50 raffle tickets are $20 each or $100 for six. Admission and raffle tickets are available at Piedmont Arts and piedmontarts.org. 215 Starling Avenue, Martinsville.

Thursday, September 24
Looted Art: An Opening Journey to Resolution, 6:30 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. talk, Thursday, Sept. 24, Piedmont Arts. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Senior Manager of Provenance Research Karen Daly will discuss art looted during World War II. This event is free and open to the public. RSVP by Wednesday, Sept. 23, to 276-632-3221 or online at PiedmontArts.org. 215 Starling Avenue, Martinsville.

Ongoing

A series of four classes on genealogical research will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Bassett Historical Center on the first four Tuesdays in September (1, 8, 15, 22). There is no charge for the classes. The classes are limited to 12. Call the Bassett Historical Center 276-629-9191 to reserve a spot.

Lynwood Artists meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Piedmont Arts.

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.

Piedmont Arts Guild meets on the fourth Thursday of each month, except in November and December, at 11:45 a.m. at Piedmont Arts.

Virginia Foothills Quilters Guild daytime group meets on the first Tuesday of each month from 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. at Piedmont Arts and on the third Friday of each month in January, March, May, July, September, and November, from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at Piedmont Arts. Virginia Foothills Quilters Guild evening group meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 6:30-9 p.m. at Piedmont Arts.

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.

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.

TOPS FIELDALE VA 0626 meets on Mondays 4-5 p.m. at the Bassett Public Library, 3969 Fairystone Hwy, Bassett. New members welcome. For more information call Patti Farmer (276) 358-0489.

Emergency pipe replacement prompts traffic shift, reduced speed

A section of westbound U.S. 58 Business (A. L. Philpott Highway) in Henry County was closed for an emergency pipe replacement, starting on Friday, August 21,

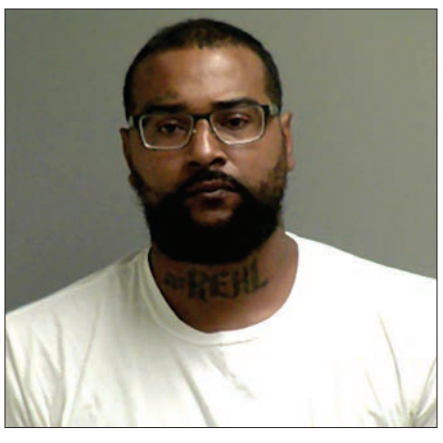
All traffic is shifted onto the eastbound lanes, with one lane for each direction. Barrels separate opposing traffic, and the speed limit reduced to 35 mph within the traffic shift.

The traffic shift will begin at Dicky's Drive and end at Virginia 1747 (Summit Road) and Virginia 1746 (Machinery Drive). Drivers entering U.S. 58 Business from Dicky's Drive, Dug Mountain Road or Summit Road will be limited to right turns for the duration of the closure. Drivers entering U.S. 58 Business from Machinery Drive will still be able to turn left or right.

Drivers are urged to pay attention to message boards and signs in the area. Work is expected to be completed by 5 p.m. Friday, August 28, weather permitting.

For the latest road conditions in Virginia, use VDOT's 511 free mobile app, visit 511 Virginia and follow the VDOT Salem District on Facebook or X.

Man charged in August shooting on Starling Avenue



Kevin Darel Preston

A 38-year-old Martinsville man was charged in connection with an Aug. 1 shooting on Starling Avenue, according to a release from the Martinsville Police Department.

Martinsville Police officers responded to the 900 block of Starling Avenue after hearing multiple shots fired in the area. Upon arrival, officers found multiple pieces of evidence related to the shooting in the rear parking lot of a business.

No injuries were reported.

Through the investigation, police identified Kevin Darel Preston as a suspect. Preston was arrested Aug. 21.

He is charged with two counts of attempted manslaughter, shooting at an occupied vehicle, reckless handling of a firearm and shooting in a public place.

Preston is being held at the Martinsville City Jail without bond.

Police said the Starling Avenue incident is unrelated to the homicide reported Aug. 1 on Fayette Street. The two incidents are not associated, according to police.

The investigation remains ongoing.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Detective Adam Parnell of the Martinsville Police Department at 276-403-5300 or Crime Stoppers at 276-63CRIME (276-632-7463). Crime Stoppers accepts anonymous tips, and tipsters may be eligible for a reward of up to $2,500 for information leading to an arrest and conviction.

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OPINION

Lab Safety



Morgan Griffith

Representative

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, lawmakers have intensified scrutiny of laboratory biosafety and research facilities that receive federal funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

As the former Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Chairman and current Health Subcommittee Chairman on Energy and Commerce, I continue to help lead investigative work of federal research labs and the NIH.

The NIH consists of 27 Institutes and Centers. The NIH maintains a vast and expansive network of labs inside and outside the United States.

One such lab is Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Hamilton, Montana.

Rocky Mountain Laboratories exercises a massive research portfolio. The lab studies various diseases, including but not limited to Salmonella, chronic wasting disease, relapsing fever and plague.

POLITICO reports that scientists there are credited with breakthroughs involving Lyme disease and Ebola, among others.

Rocky Mountain operates as a Biosafety Level 4 laboratory, which is the highest safety designation. Scientists at Level 4 labs tend to deal with diseases that are life-threatening and must follow the most stringent security requirements.

According to a webpage from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), only a handful of U.S. labs are qualified Level 4 labs.

However, within the last year, the Montana lab was linked to two concerning events.

One incident occurred in November 2025, when a Rocky Mountain worker was bitten by an infected lab monkey!

The monkey was infected with a lethal tick-borne illness known as Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognizes the severe illness as the most widespread viral hemorrhagic fever.

After news broke of the monkey bite incident, questions swirled about the Montana lab, its safety protocols and how such a lab incident could happen.

Controversy did not stop there.

In June 2026, two NIH researchers from Rocky Mountain were criminally charged by the Department of Justice!

Their crime?

Smuggling monkeypox into the United States!

According to the Department of Justice, the two scientists were traveling on a commercial plane back to the U.S. from the Democratic Republic of Congo in Africa. The Congo is the epicenter of a current Ebola virus outbreak.

When the scientists arrived in Detroit, they lied to Customs and Border Patrol officers about the contents of a black case. The scientists claimed their case contained diagnostics and testing equipment.

Federal law enforcement discovered and tested 113 vials, many of which contained deactivated monkeypox virus. Another vial contained chickenpox and a couple contained human DNA.

It is clear that both researchers have experience working with infectious pathogens. In fact, Dr. Vincent Munster led Rocky Mountain's virus ecology section at that time.

Upon hearing about these incidents, I wanted to get answers.

This August, I traveled to Montana, where I received a tour of the Level 4 lab and a briefing. NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya, who was a vocal opponent of COVID-19 lockdown policies, joined me to hear from the lab's researchers.

Explaining the monkey bite incident, the researchers had put the lab monkey under anesthesia. As one worker held the monkey up to their chest, the worker accidentally tapped the back of the monkey's jaw.

On reflex, the monkey subconsciously bit the worker.

The worker received immediate treatment for their minor wound, and after appropriate precautions, returned to Rocky Mountain to continue research.

In research settings, animal-handling incidents can occur despite established safety and handling protocols.

Researchers I met with at Rocky Mountain also said they were ashamed and felt betrayed by Munster's actions.

The Munster case seemed to be a case of arrogance.

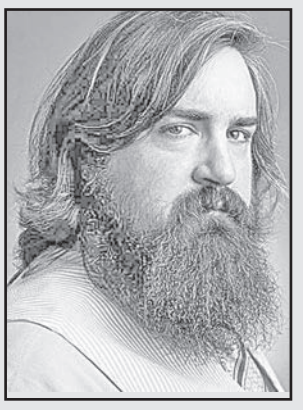
Because he was a leading scientist, the theory goes that Munster felt like the normal rules should not apply to him. But more will become clear as the criminal charges proceed.

We have seen too often recently that some scientists share this philosophy, which is why we need to pass specific rules banning risky research, such as my legislation, the Risky Research Review Act.

Rogue activity in the "name of science" must always be confronted. Thanks in part to my efforts to confront these issues, the group responsible for funding dangerous coronavirus research in Wuhan, China, was debarred from getting contracts with the U.S. government.

As infectious disease research develops, Congress has a responsibility to protect the American people. I will continue my vigilance on improving safety compliance, my investigative work and my exploration of additional Congressional action that can be taken regarding biolaboratory safety.

Regarding Ghostbusters and diseased lettuce



By Ben R. Williams

In the movie "Ghostbusters," there are two main antagonists: Gozer, a dimension-traveling being of unfathomable evil bent on the destruction of the world, and Walter Peck, a mid-level inspector for the Environmental Protection Agency.

When I was a kid, I hated Peck WAY more.

You remember Walter Peck: he shows up at the firehouse where the Ghostbusters operate and makes them shut down the containment unit in the basement, causing a wave of ghosts and psychic energy to explode through the ceiling and cover the city. The Ghostbusters are just trying to help people and Walter Peck ruins everything! Plus, he's a jerk to Bill Murray! How can you not hate him?

Sometime in my 20's, me and my buddy Bradley were watching Ghostbusters for the 400th time, and I suddenly experienced a creeping sense of horror.

"Oh no," I thought. "Walter Peck was RIGHT."

Yes, Peck is a jerk, and he's arrogant, and he makes a massive error in judgment. But aside from that — and it pains me to say this — his actions are justified.

In real life, if you heard that four guys built a contraption that doubles as a huge bomb in the center of America's most populous city and were running around carrying unlicensed nuclear accelerators and they were stopped by some random dude from the EPA, you would consider that man a hero.

In fact — and man, it REALLY pains me to say this — Ghostbusters is basically a conservative/Libertarian fantasy. The central idea of the movie is that all the silly red tape and oversight from government agencies like the EPA is strangling entrepreneurs, and when the dumb bureaucrats fail, the only thing that can save the world is private industry.

This is how we know Ghostbusters is a work of fiction: in the real world, rejecting government oversight in favor of unfettered private industry usually results in paramilitary organizations that murder civilians rather than triumphs over giant marshmallow men.

It can also result in disastrous consequences at the grocery store, which is the scenario we're all currently experiencing.

In an opinion piece for Food Safety News (FSN) dated Sept. 26, 2025 — just under a year ago — Phyllis Entis wrote that President Donald Trump and Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. were in the midst of a plan to dismantle the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

They fired every member of the FDA's media communications team. They shifted the responsibility for food safety inspections from the federal government to the states. They also slashed staffing, most pertinently to the FDA's Field Laboratory Operations, which were cut by more than half.

The FDA was already struggling before the Trump administration made these cuts, Entis wrote, and she predicted that the new changes would make things dramatically worse.

"What can U.S. consumers expect as a result of these roll-backs?" she wrote last September. "More foodborne disease, including more hospitalizations and deaths. More outbreaks going unreported and unsolved. Inconsistent food safety inspection standards from state to state."

Well Phyllis Entis, I'm sorry to report that you hit the bullseye.

Now that RFK Jr. has dismantled and desecrated the FDA just like one of his beloved roadkill raccoons, it seems like a new food item is being recalled every other day. Aside from the famous Taylor Farms lettuce that gives you diarrhea so bad you'll pray for death, here's a partial (repeat, partial) list of food items that have been recalled this summer, arranged in no particular order:

Frozen blueberries, eggs, jalapeno peppers and jalapeno-related dips and salsas, soup kits, salad dressings, granola, infant formula, multiple kinds of cheese, mixed berries, pita chips, chocolate bars, chia seeds, salmon, yellowfin tuna, peeled garlic, cream cheese spreads, tofu spreads, cottage cheese, powdered beverage mixes, potato chips, pork rinds, coleslaw products, and finally, in utterly terrible news for any expatriates from the Netherlands, dried herring, kippered herring, AND whole smoked herring.

The contaminants found in these products range from botulism to E. coli to salmonella to listeria. If you're a healthy adult, ingesting any one of these contaminants will result in a very unpleasant experience. If you're a child or an adult in poor health, it could prove fatal. In fact, two people in Michigan died earlier this month from cyclosporiasis caused by contaminated food items. Thousands more have been made violently ill.

When you see the reams of rules and regulations that factory farms have to follow, it's easy to wonder why they're all necessary. It's especially easy if you're a crackpot like RFK Jr. If he hadn't been born a Kennedy, RFK Jr. would have long ago been arrested for running a failed wellness retreat for people who believe that taking mercury enemas will open their third eye.

But much like OSHA guidelines, these rules are written in blood and exist for good reason. They exist to protect all of us, especially the most vulnerable among us. Mothers should be able to go to the grocery store confident in the knowledge that a tub of baby formula on the shelf isn't going to sicken or, God forbid, kill their child. We're ostensibly supposed to be a first world country here.

At times like these, I'm reminded of a great quote from the late P.J. O'Rourke, a man who, much like the movie "Ghostbusters," was very funny while also being of a conservative/Libertarian bent:

"The Republicans are the party that says government doesn't work and then they get elected and prove it."

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

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OPINION

A Hosta scam? You bet



Holly Kozelsky

Every now and then a seasoned gardener comes across a plant she's never seen before, and it astounds and delights her.

No matter how experienced she is, she's never seen anything like the Royal Peacock Feather Hosta!

The Peacock Flame Hosta is colorful and splashy. Around its base fan out bicolored leaves that look more like coleus than hosta, about three or four levels high. From there sprouts an abundance of stalks of small seven-petaled flowers and, more notably, 13 or 14 peacock feathers.

The Peacock Flame Hosta plant comes in colors straight from the 1980s: eerily electric looking blue, or yellow, or green, or orange, or pink, or purple, or white.

Spireshells.com advertises "Peacock Flame Hosta Corms - Stunning Colors that Brighten Any Space." The price is shown in grey as $79.99, and that is crossed out with "$39.99" in green beside it. "Hurry! Only 250 left in stock," the website warns us. "98% customer buy 3-5 items to use daily and gifts for their beloved one."

The website says that "2505 People are viewing right now," and that number increases by the moment. A countdown tells us the sale is ending in 9:19 – 9:18 – 9:17 …

The website has a handful of reviews, such as from this happy husband: "I transplanted this Peacock Hosta into my patio pot a few weeks back. My wife's out here watering it right now, and I just love this quiet little moment. I adore this plant, but I love my wife even more," with a heart emoji. There's even a picture of a woman on a dingy back patio using a hose which ends in a watering can to water a garish purple plant with purple and blue leaves.

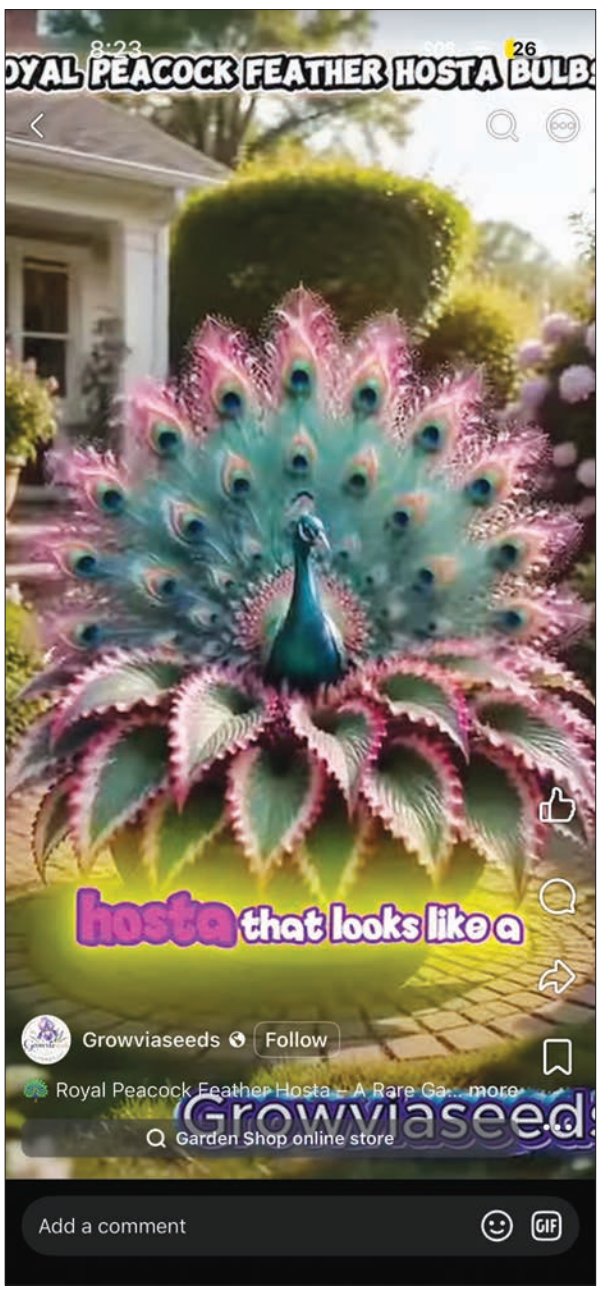
The hostas which grow in my yard have root clumps, but this website talks about them growing from corms and yet a video on the website shows a bulb being planted, watered and growing quickly into a blue plant.

Perhaps most surprisingly, the Peacock Hosta continues with its leaves and blooming colorfully and profusely even in the snow.

The bottom of the website has that official-looking panel most have, with links such as "Track My Order," "Shipping Policy," "Return & Refund Policy," "Cancellation/Order Change," "About Us," "FAQs," "Payment Methods," "Terms of Service" and "Privacy Policy," but none of them are active links. Tapping on them does not do anything.

The address shows in Singapore.

But the Facebook page "Growviaseeds" takes the Royal Peacock Feather Hosta to a whole new level. Not only does this Hosta grow peacock feathers out the top, but it also grows a peacock body! Its stately breast, neck and face rise above the plant regally, its resplendent tail feathers proudly displayed around it.





Screenshots of websites promoting nonexistent hostas show how AI-generated images are being used to market fake plants online.

There's one on Facebook called GreenySeeds. It sells seeds it claims are of "Rare Midnight Purple Hosta."

"Plant it this November and let this hardy, magical hosta take over your garden. As Christmas approaches, its deep purple glow becomes a natural holiday decoration. A rare black and purple hosta that looks like it came from another planet."

Well, no kidding. It certainly does not come from Planet Earth.

Though the first parts of the video show it being planted and growing in show, the next scene of the video says, "It grows in heat up to 115 degrees Fahrenheit."

One of the best scenes of the video show a man lovingly placing his Midnight Purple Hosta on the counter, underneath the water spigot. The sink basin is to the right of the spigot, and there are no handles to turn water on or off.

I wanted to click onto the website to see more to be able to make even more fun of it, but my computer's security program lit up: "This website has been blocked. Www.greenyseeds.com could be a fake e-store. Hackers create fake online stores like a real store, so they can try to steal your personal info or money."

It would be obvious to most people that all these videos are created by AI. These websites are selling something that doesn't exist.

There is indeed a Hosta called Hosta 'Peacock Feathers.' However, it looks nothing like feathers nor like a peacock. It's just a Hosta with pretty green leaves, rounded at the top and pointed at the end.

While all of this might be obviously fake to most of us, many people fall for it. The comment section of the "peacock flame hosta" has a combination of people warning that this is a scam, people admiring the beauty of the plant and several saying they ordered from there and the seeds just grew weeds.

Maybe most of us don't need to be afraid of falling for a scam now, with the Peacock Flame Hosta ads being so ridiculous and obvious. However, AI is getting better and better fast, at the same time that businesses are doing as much as they can to get rid of their customers in person and just make all interactions online.

Though it's obvious to us today what's real and what's fake, we're moving quickly to a time when we won't know.

Community Chronicles



Jack E. Dalton (Photo sourced from BTW21)

By Jarred Marlowe

Jack Emerson Dalton was not a politician by training. He was an electrician. He grew up in Pittsylvania County, served in the U.S. Navy, and spent 35 years working for E.I. DuPont while running an orchard on the side. But when he took a seat on the Henry County Board of Supervisors representing the Collinsville District, he turned out to be exactly the kind of public servant a growing county needed.

Dalton served on the board for nearly 27 years, and the list of things built or started during his tenure reads like a blueprint for modern Henry County. In just the first few years alone, the county constructed a new jail, broke ground on plans for the County Administration Building, built Bassett High School, established a library board, created a central accounting system, launched the parks and recreation department, and passed the county's first subdivision ordinance — its first real step toward managed growth. Later came Magna Vista High School, Axton Middle School, the county landfill, and the formation of the Public Service Authority. In a 1989 interview, Dalton said those early years were what he was most proud of. The foundation they laid shaped everything that came after.

His influence extended well beyond Henry County. He was elected chairman of the board in 1980 and went on to serve as president of the Virginia Association of Counties in 1982 — a statewide organization representing all 95 Virginia counties. He served on the association's executive board from 1986 forward and held positions as both second and first vice president. Governor Charles Robb appointed him to the State Local Government Advisory Council in 1982, and Governor Gerald Baliles reappointed him to the same body, making Dalton a consistent voice in Richmond for local governments across the state. He also served on several state legislative committees during that period.

He was a Collinsville Lion, an Elk, a member of the Virginia Horticulture Society, and a longtime member of First Baptist Church of Collinsville. He attended Brosville High School in Pittsylvania County and never seems to have lost the practical, grounded perspective of a man who spent his working life as a tradesman.

Dalton died on May 24, 2000, at Memorial Hospital Martinsville/Henry County. He was 72. He was still serving as chairman of the board at the time of his death.

In addition to naming a public park after him, the county established the Jack Dalton Community Service Award in 2001, presented annually to the Henry County resident who best reflects the standard of service he set. Board Chair Jim Adams described the award as a tribute to Dalton's "exemplary public service" and a standard of commitment and selflessness that "continues to inspire our community." The award is now in its 25th year, and the list of recipients reads like a who's who of Henry County civic life.

Not bad for a man who spent his days wiring buildings and tending an orchard.

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.



King Wilbur's reign continues in Ridgeway

King Wilbur, who served as the feline mascot of Magnolia & Main Books, isn't ready to give up his crown just because the bookstore has closed.

Wilbur has announced that he will continue his reign as King of Ridgeway, and Mayor Craig O'Der Jr. has confirmed that his position will remain unchanged. Wilbur is also invited to oversee Town Council meetings.

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Eligible families have until Aug. 31 to apply for SUN Bucks

Gov. Abigail Spanberger is encouraging eligible Virginia families to apply for SUN Bucks, a summer nutrition program that provides a one-time $120 benefit for each eligible school-aged child.

More than 628,000 Virginia children have received SUN Bucks since the program launched in June. The state expects nearly 705,000 children to be eligible, and applications for this summer's benefit will be accepted through Aug. 31.

SUN Bucks can be used to purchase groceries, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy and meat, at businesses that accept SNAP EBT benefits.

Eligible households can apply online, submit a paper application by mail or call the SUN Bucks Call Center at 866-513-1414 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Virginia is one of 39 states participating in the federal Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer program, also known as SUN Bucks.

DRBA raises concerns over proposed Stokes County data center

The Dan River Basin Association is urging the Stokes County Board of Commissioners to reject a rezoning request for a proposed 1,850-acre hyperscale data center near Walnut Cove, citing concerns about water use, wastewater, flooding and potential impacts on the Dan River.

DRBA also is encouraging the county to consider a temporary or permanent moratorium on new data center development. The organization said a moratorium would give county officials additional time to evaluate the potential impacts of projects of that size and establish development standards.

"DRBA has never been opposed to responsible economic development. Conservation, recreation, community planning and economic vitality can and should work together," said DRBA Executive Director Tiffany Haworth. "But responsible development requires good information and good planning. Right now, there are too many unanswered questions about Project Delta."

The proposed Project Delta development would encompass approximately 1,850 acres of largely undeveloped land near Walnut Cove along the Dan River.

DRBA said it is particularly concerned about whether sufficient information is available to determine how much water the facility would require and where that water would come from.

The organization noted that the county's 2015 Stokes County 2035 Vision Plan concluded the county had adequate water supplies for future needs, but said that assessment predates the proposed hyperscale data center.

Project Delta has reportedly considered obtaining water from the Town of Walnut Cove. DRBA also pointed to questions about the town's water-system capacity and the Stokes County Water and Sewer Authority's request that Walnut Cove reduce the amount of water it purchases because of other demands on the system.

DRBA said those concerns are particularly significant as the county experiences drought conditions.

The organization also questioned how wastewater from the proposed facility would be treated and whether existing municipal treatment facilities are designed to handle potential industrial wastewater from a hyperscale data center.

DRBA specifically raised concerns about the possibility of wastewater being treated through Walnut Cove's constructed wetland treatment system before being discharged into Town Fork Creek and the Dan River.

The proposed development site also includes substantial FEMA-designated floodplain along the Dan River, according to DRBA.

The organization said the county's planning documents identify floodplains as potential community assets for parks, greenways, recreation and connections between communities.

DRBA said the project should be evaluated beyond whether individual buildings can be constructed outside mapped floodplain areas, citing potential risks associated with industrial structures, electrical substations, backup generators and fuel-storage facilities near the floodplain.

The organization also pointed to the 2014 Duke Energy coal ash spill and its impact on the Dan River, and its work with numerous partners to restore and protect the river.

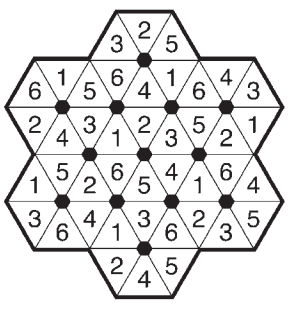
American Rivers named the Dan River one of America's Most Endangered Rivers in 2026, citing development pressures facing the river, according to DRBA.

The river supports drinking water supplies, fish and wildlife, paddling, fishing, hiking and other recreational activities for more than 1 million people, DRBA said.

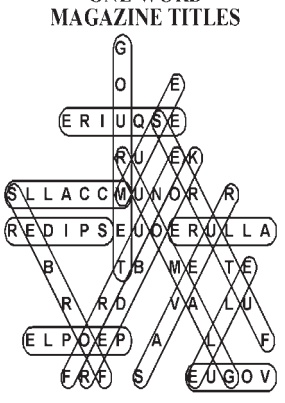
"Stokes County's natural resources are among its greatest assets and decisions being made today will determine what future generations inherit," Haworth said. "We hope to continue working with the county for decades to come. The decisions made today should protect and strengthen that asset, not put it at greater risk."

Puzzle Answers!

SNOWFLAKES solution

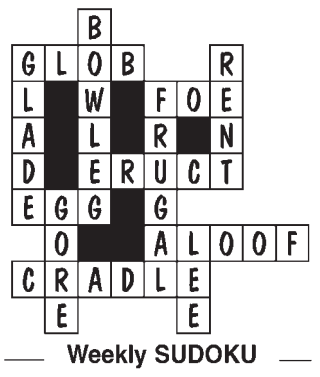


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In the spirit of partnership, we're sharing highlights from our sister newsroom at The Enterprise (www.theenterprise.net) to help keep our readers in Henry County and Martinsville informed.

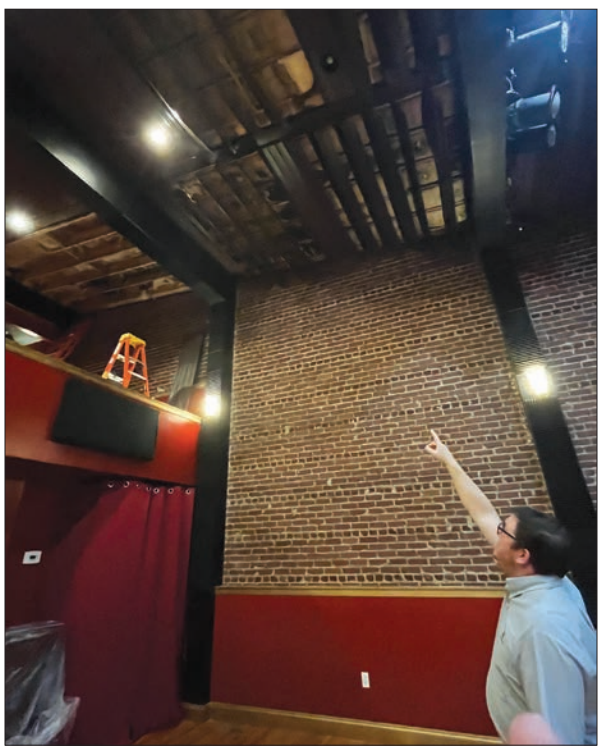
Star Theatre roof damage less severe than expected

By Taylor Boyd

The Stuart Town Council received an update at its Wednesday, Aug. 19 meeting on the condition of the Star Theatre's roof, which is undergoing renovations during the building's temporary closure.

Town Manager Bryce Simmons said condensation had been building up underneath the vinyl siding inside the roof.

"We have since then been able to tear all of that vinyl siding down and remove the insulation that was above it. The condition is not quite as bad as I thought it was going to be originally," he said.



Town Manager Bryce Simmons provided an update on the condition of the Star Theatre's roof.



From left are DMV employees Rita Cooper and Penny Morrison, DMV Select Manager Diana Belcher and Deputy Director of DMV Select Administration Barry Browning are pictured outside the renovated office.

DMV Select renovations improve safety, service

By Taylor Boyd

Renovations to the Department of Motor Vehicles Select office inside the Patrick County Administration Building have been completed, making the space safer and more efficient for employees and customers.

The work, which began earlier this year, was prompted in part by a walkthrough with a fire marshal last year. Installing fire shutters on the DMV windows was identified as one of the key items that needed attention to bring the office into compliance with the Virginia Fire Marshal's Office.



The annual Demolition Derby will be held on Saturday, Aug. 29, at Rotary Field in Stuart. (Contributed)

Annual Demolition Derby returns Saturday

By Taylor Boyd

The annual Demolition Derby will be held Saturday, Aug. 29, at Rotary Field in Stuart.

Sponsored by Patrick County Tourism, the Rotary Club of Stuart, ValleyStar Credit Union and Ten Oaks/Prolam, the event will be hosted by Sarge & Sons Demolition Derby Inc. of Ohio.

Spectator gates open at 4:30 p.m. The children's Power Wheels Derby begins at 6 p.m., with the main event scheduled for 7 p.m.

The entry fee is $50 per vehicle, and pit passes are $20 each.

Tickets are $10 for ages 13 and older, $5 for ages 7-12, and free for children 6 and younger.

The rain date is Friday, Sept. 4.

For entry forms and more information, visit www.patrickcountyfair.com or www.sarge-demo-derby.com.

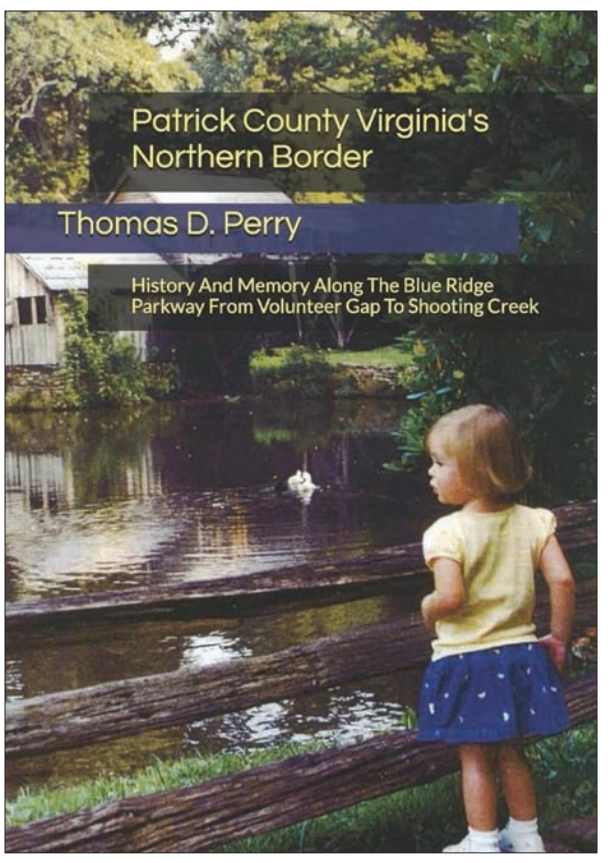
Perry's new book explores Patrick County along the Parkway

By Taylor Boyd

Local author and historian Tom Perry's latest book "Patrick County Virginia's Northern Border: History And Memory Along The Blue Ridge Parkway From Volunteer Gap to Shooting Creek," was published earlier this month.

Perry said his book is laid out so that if you start driving on Main Street in Mount Airy, North Carolina and drive up to the Blue Ridge Parkway and "keep going north, you'll hit every chapter in order."

Perry's book is available on Amazon, on https://laurel-hill-publishing-llc.square.site, and at select retailers in Patrick County.



Tom Perry's latest book "Patrick County Virginia's Northern Border: History And Memory Along The Blue Ridge Parkway From Volunteer Gap to Shooting Creek," is out now.

Savory September brings New York flavors to Piedmont Arts

Big city flavors meet small town charm at Savory September: New York, New York, a Big Apple-themed fundraiser for the arts from 6:30-9:30 p.m., Friday, Sept. 18, at Piedmont Arts.

Local chefs will serve small bites inspired by the flavors of New York City, from classic street food and deli fare to themed dishes from the city's iconic neighborhoods and silver-screen moments. Expect nods to Little Italy, "Breakfast at Tiffany's," the corner bakery, and plenty of other New York favorites.

Savory September Chefs

- Katie Adkins, Rilynn Cowart, Steph Cowart, Meredith Vaughn, and Sally Vaughn.
- Katie Ryan Barham, Kelsey Bassett, Susan Cook, Olivia Garrett, Sarah Hodges, and Caroline Johnston.
- Anne Compson, Mary Compson, and Janet Lewis.
- Rachel and Shannon Cox and Donna and Jimmy McGarry.
- Susan Critz, Judy Dashoff, and Marty Gardner.
- Monique Holland and Anna Wheeler.
- Kat and Dave Kitzmiller of Be Wiched Diner.
- Blanche and Tom Mahoney, Esther and Buz Schilbe, and Barbara and Guy Stanley.
- Cassandra and Demedrain Witcher.

The soundtrack to the event will be provided by singer-songwriter Marie Anderson, whose repertoire includes original music and covers of more than 2,000 songs spanning pop, country, rock, and blues.

Guests can also test their luck in the 50/50 raffle. The winner will split the pot with Piedmont Arts. Raffle tickets are $20 each or $100 for six.

Admission tickets are $65 per person and include food and drinks.

Admission and 50/50 raffle tickets are on sale now at Piedmont Arts and PiedmontArts.org.

Savory September is an annual fall fundraiser that supports Piedmont Arts exhibits and programs. The event is sponsored by Visit-Martinsville, Diversified Trust, Ameristaff, Bassett Office Supply Collinsville Printing, and Draper Flowers and Gifts.

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



Big city flavors meet small town charm at Savory September: New York, New York, a Big Apple-themed fundraiser for the arts from 6:30-9:30 p.m., Friday, Sept. 18, at Piedmont Arts.



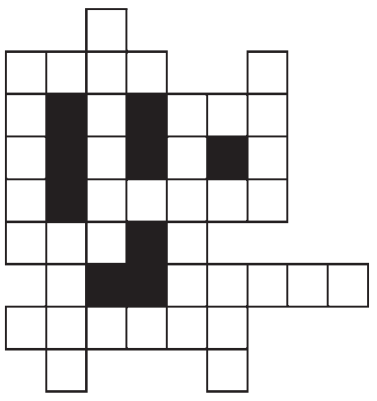
PUZZLE TIME

FEAR KNOT

By: rj johnson

DOUBT? ...OR DARE!

GEG
UGFARL
OLAFO
♥ ETNR
♥ GWOLBE
♥ ELE
♥ REOG
AGDEL
OEF
DACLER
♥ RECTU
♥ LBGO

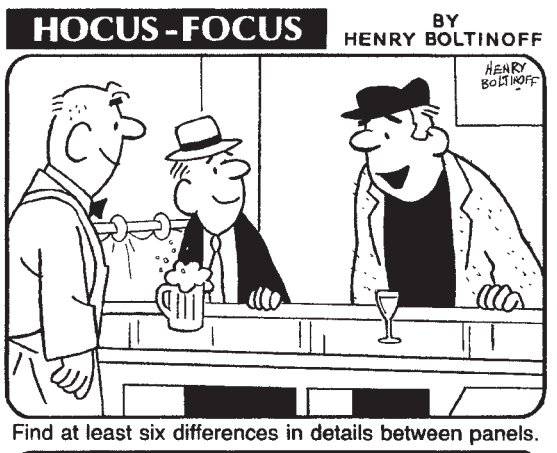


Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. **HAGNEC** becomes **CHANGE**). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥ **RATHE** becomes **HATER** or **EARTH** or **HEART**). Fit each string's word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

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Glass is larger. 2. Hand is moved. 3. Bow tie is missing. 4. Mug is reversed. 5. Arm is longer. 6. Lapel is missing.

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MAGIC MAZE ● ONE-WORD MAGAZINE TITLES

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: **News Magazine with Four Letters**

Allure	Fortune	McCall's	Saveur
Elle	Futures	Muse	Spider
Esquire	Glamour	People	Vogue
Forbes	Gourmet	Redbook	

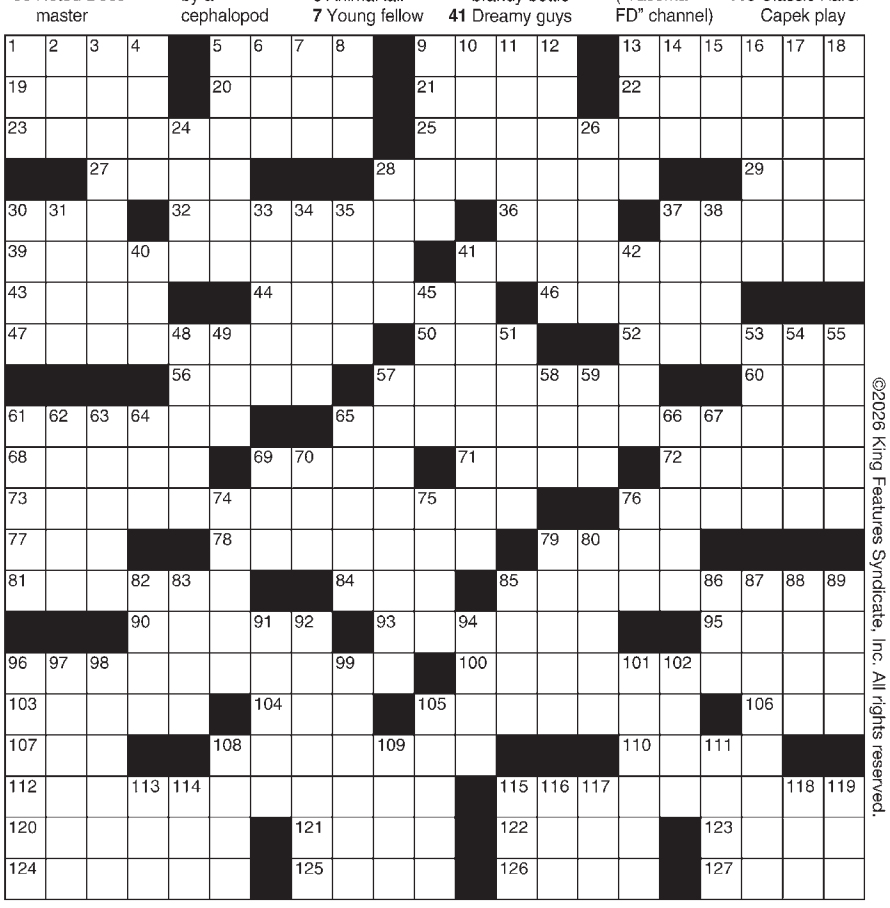
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Super Crossword

SHORT MONTHS

ACROSS
1 Gentle
5 Not active
9 Hockey great Gordie
13 Certain utility meter reader
19 "Pronto!"
20 Back end
21 Notion
22 Hun leader
23 "Klute" actress
25 Line of air fresheners requiring an outlet
27 Element #10
28 See 38-Down
29 Texting format, for short
30 Land in eau
32 Strong-arms
36 Lobbying org.
37 Singer Ross
39 "Let's Get It On" singer
41 Certain fruit stone
43 "— fair in love and war"
44 Stood to lose
46 Idyllic places
47 City official on "Family Guy"
50 Part of UCLA
52 Make tidy
56 Noted Deco master
57 Notion
60 Go in haste
61 Fogged up, as a sauna
65 School for associate's degrees
68 Caribbean resort
69 "Let it stand"
71 Goes after in court
72 Intended (to)
73 Bartending tool with holes
76 1841-45 first family
77 Primo pitcher
78 Cape Cod resort village
79 Dried up
81 Heptathlete Jackie Joyner- —
84 Railroad depot: Abbr.
85 Portend a good outcome
90 Dog's reward
93 Scored a major victory
95 Mine, in France
96 Brownish-toned picture
100 Stuff squirted by a cephalopod
103 Slow to react
104 NFL notable Manning
105 Some private planes
106 "Is that so!"
107 Univ. senior's test
108 Weapons depot
109 Tiger's sound, to tots
110 Halifax native
111 Poolside seat
120 Large moon of Uranus
121 "I'm buying"
122 Region
123 Rebuke from Caesar
124 Lie comfily close
125 Belgian river
126 Frat guys
127 Span represented by the first three letters of 12 answers in this puzzle

DOWN
1 — Mahal
2 "Hugo" title role player Butterfield
3 Polite
4 Sword variety
5 Patch variety
6 Animal lair
7 Young fellow
8 Time of note
9 Old LP players
10 Polish river
11 Program running in a browser
12 Topic of an otologist's instructions
13 Intent stare
14 Munched on
15 Fuel additive brand
16 Country singer Ronnie
17 School reunion-goers
18 Pesters
24 Central points
26 "Champion" of Spain
28 Overly docile
30 Muslim prayer leader
31 See 70-Down
33 Heron variety
34 Elevate
35 Sac in anatomy
37 "Finished!"
38 With 28-Across, church meeting cry
40 Abbr. on a brandy bottle
41 Dreamy guys
42 Italian for "hundred"
45 SpaceX head Musk
48 Chart anew
49 Ironic, as wit
51 Rub to clean
53 Main topic
54 "The — Sanction" (1975 film)
55 Must have
57 Halve with an ax, say
58 Prior to, to a bard
59 Mac rivals
61 "Wheel of Fortune" host Pat
62 Halting of hostilities
63 Leonhard of pure mathematics
64 Prez Lincoln
65 Denim pants
66 Cake tier
67 "— Abner"
69 Hog's pen
70 With 31-Down, lilting song syllables
74 Ovine animal
75 El — (ocean current)
76 —TV ("Tacoma FD" channel)
79 Armani offerings
80 Incite
82 Incite
83 Part of QED
85 Basic lessons
86 Once lived
87 Move to a new country
88 Individual
89 Similar to
91 "Billy, Don't Be —"
92 "Anna Karenina" novelist
94 Yule tune
96 Join the team
97 Get dressed
98 Irritates
99 Promotional connections
101 Ski jackets
102 Quadrennial games org.
105 Seat weaver
108 Clearasil target
109 Moniker
111 Curds and —
113 Craft
114 Pine- —
115 Small dollop
116 Make a gaffe
117 Co. top dog
118 Give — shot
119 Classic Karel Capek play



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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆

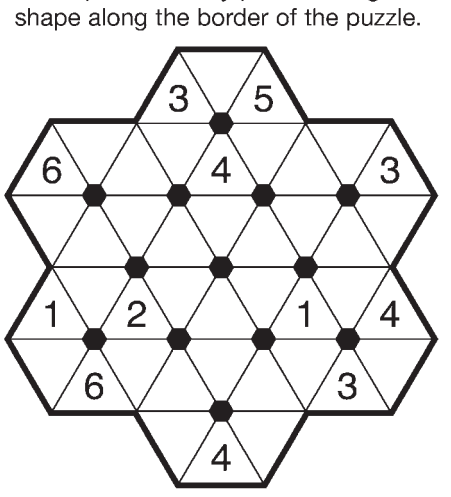
◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

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



DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

• Women lie more than men in their online dating profiles.

• Many quilts made by military soldiers were known as "convalescent quilts," since they made them while recuperating from wounds received in the line of duty.

• Nuclear rain from the Chernobyl disaster fell as far west as Ireland.

• The word LEGO comes from the first two letters of the Danish words "leg" and "godt," or "play well."

• More than half a million pet owners worldwide have chosen to implant their pets with "neuticles," which are testicular implants for a neutered pet.

• Egyptian butchers wore high heels to keep their feet free of blood and debris on the floor.

• Early in her career, model Gisele Bundchen was told she'd never achieve success without cosmetic surgery to decrease her nose size. She refused and later had the last laugh by becoming one of the most highly paid models in history.

• It is thought that 80% of the world's gold is still in the ground.

• While screening around 2 million airline passengers per day, TSA officers are accustomed to confiscating items such as full water bottles and too-large toiletries, but their more astonishing finds include grenades, cannonballs and even a samurai sword.

• The fear of vegetables is called "lachanophobia."

• Actor Daniel Craig, as a reward for playing James Bond, can choose any Aston Martin from the factory for the rest of his life.

• All organ donations will inevitably fail, since transplanted organs "scar" over time, which eventually renders them unusable.

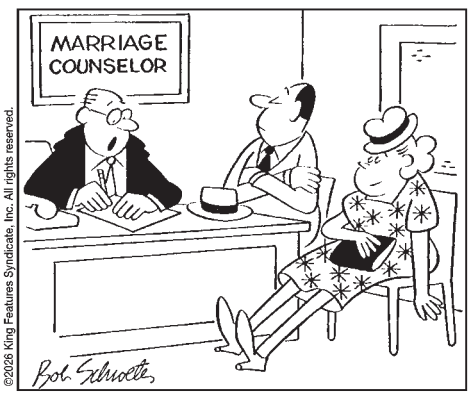
• In 2019, Forbes named Kylie Jenner the world's youngest self-made billionaire at age 21.

• Around 400 B.C., the Greek inventor Archytas of Tarentum built an early "robot" — a wooden pigeon that flew on a steam-powered arm.

***

Thought for the Day: "Don't find fault, find a remedy." — *Henry Ford*

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"... and does Stanley's _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ affect your sleep, Mrs. Feeny? Mrs. Feeny..."

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!

Speck
ARING

Dame
ROMANT

Taut
ENSET

First
DIEMAN

TODAY'S WORD

Advertise With Us!

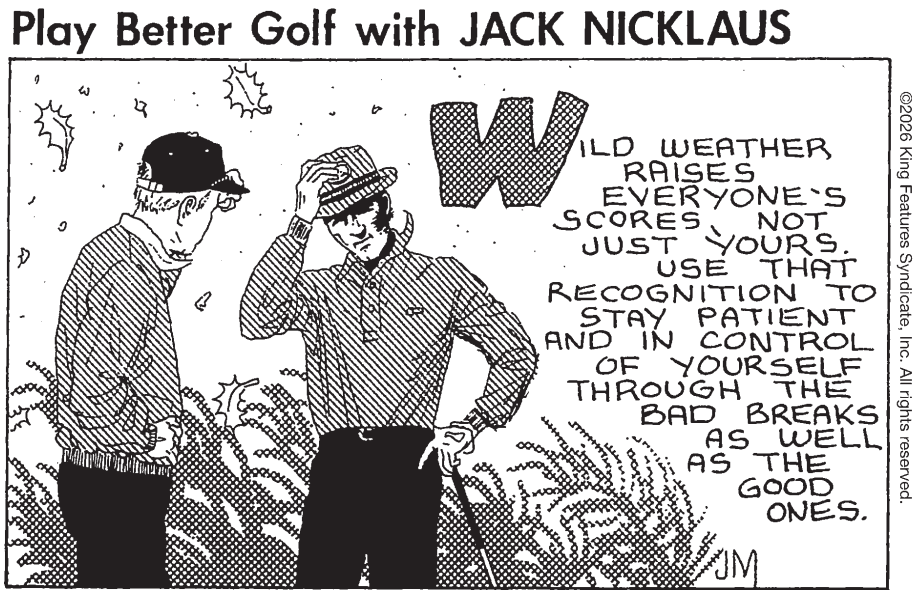
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- Highly Customizable Packages that include print, digital or both
- Deeply discounted rates
- Seasonal Specials

What we have:
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- A talented team of designers who will work to help you reach your base.

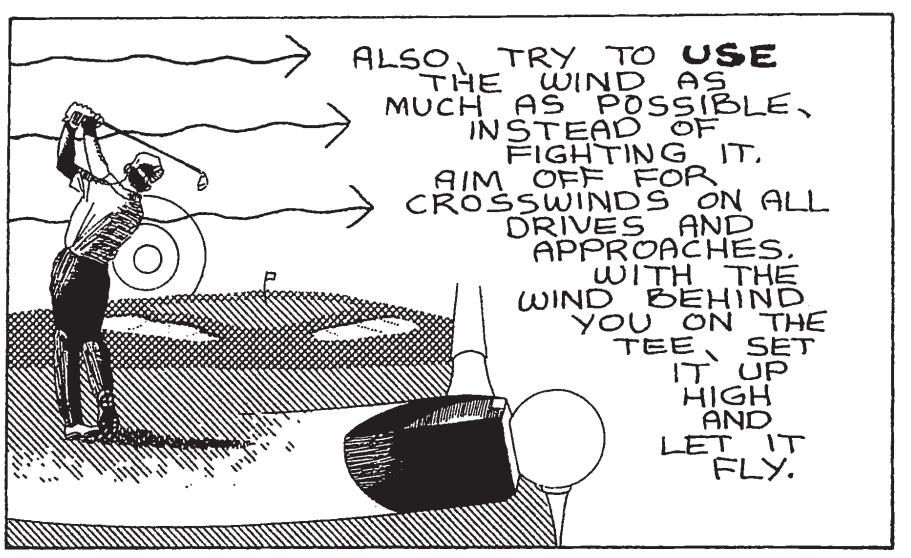
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For more information, call the office at (276) 340-2445

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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LEGAL

COUNTY OF HENRY
REZONING PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, a series of public hearings have been scheduled for **September 9, 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 recommendations on the applications to the Board of Supervisors.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors will conduct public hearings on the following applications on **September 22, 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-26-17 Kenneth Darin Lewis

The property is located in the northwest corner of the intersection of A.L. Philpott Hwy and Stoney Mountain Rd, in the Iriswood District. The property is shown on Tax Map 44.9/53A,53H and 45.7/9G. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 40.34-acres from Rural Residential District R-R to Limited Industrial District I-2. The applicant states that he wishes to develop a self-storage facility and potentially a restaurant on the property.

Case R-26-18 The Lester Group

The property is located on the east side of Kings Manor Dr, in the Reed Creek District. The property is shown on Tax Map 29.2/25U. The applicant is requesting the rezoning of approximately 1.937-acres from Suburban Residential District S-R to Commercial District B-1. The applicant wishes to develop 2 additional apartment building consisting of 12 units each, for a total of 24 additional units.

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

Lee H. Clark, AICP
Director of Planning, Zoning & Inspection

LEGAL

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. 26000977-00
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104
HENRY CIRCUIT COURT
3160 Kings Mountain Road, 3rd Floor, Martinsville, VA 24112
Michael Timothy Riley, Jr. v. Brittany Dale Burnette Riley
Address Unknown

The object of this suit is to:
DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE
It is ORDERED that Brittany Dale Burnette Riley appear at the above-named court and protect her interests on or before October 2, 2026.

AUGUST 3, 2026

Katherine Salgado
[X] CLERK [ ] JUDGE

LEGAL

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. CL26001306-00
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104
HENRY CIRCUIT COURT
3160 Kings Mountain Road, 3rd Floor, Martinsville, VA 24112
CRYSTAL ANN RIGNEY v. HUMBERTO ZUNIGA ROLDAN
123 Moctezume St
Ayala Morelos, Mexico

The object of this suit is to:
OBTAIN A DIVORCE A VINCULO MATRIMONII
It is ORDERED that HUMBERTO ZUNIGA ROLDAN appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before October 20, 2026.

AUGUST 21, 2026

Katherine Salgado
[X] CLERK [ ] JUDGE

LEGAL

VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

ADVERTISEMENT FOR SNOW REMOVAL EQUIPMENT SERVICES WITH OPERATOR SIGNUP

The Virginia Department of Transportation invites heavy equipment owners to sign up for the rental of their equipment with operators for SNOW & ICE REMOVAL purposes in Martinsville Residency which includes the counties of Henry, Patrick and Carroll during the winter of 2026-2027. Price per hour shall include operators, fuel, tire chains, supplies and required insurance. VDOT will need dump trucks, pickups with plows, motorgraders, backhoes, dozers, track loaders, tractors, rubber-tire loaders and farm tractors. All equipment shall be equipped for night work and be in good mechanical condition to ensure a safe and dependable 24/7 operation. VDOT reserves the right to determine acceptability of equipment size and condition for the task. Contractors submitting prices meeting the requirements of the Agreement may be contracted with and may be eligible to receive a bonus payment and a minimum guaranteed payment for the season.

Contractors must submit their application on the electronic M7B bidding site at https://plow4va.vdot.virginia.gov. All new and returning Contractors must be active in the Virginia eProcurement Portal (eVA) in order to do business with the Commonwealth of Virginia (https://eva.virginia.gov).

Applications received by 7:00 PM on Friday September 18, 2026 may be eligible for a bonus payment. See the EVA posting for additional information, including contract requirements.

Questions can be directed to the Martinsville
Residency from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday - Friday.
Phone: 276-629-2582
Email: SalemDistrictSnow@vdot.virginia.gov

EEO/AA Employer

West Piedmont Higher Education Center adds staff



Dr. Pamela Randall was selected as the Chief Program Officer



As Procurement Specialist, Karen Otterstein will support the center's purchasing and procurement operations, helping ensure the organization's resources are managed efficiently and effectively.



As Testing Center Support Specialist, Tamara Scott will support testing sessions and make sure testing rules are followed, as well as greet visitors, answer questions, and keep the testing area organized and quiet.



As Facilities Coordinator, Stephen Childers will oversee the day-to-day coordination of the center's three facilities and support the center's ability to provide welcoming, functional spaces for students, educators, businesses, community partners, and event guests.

West Piedmont Higher Education Center is strengthening its leadership team and expanding its organizational capacity with the addition of three new staff members, including a new Chief Program Officer who will serve as a member of the Center's executive team.

Dr. Pamela Randall joins the center as Chief Program Officer, bringing decades of experience in higher education, education programming, and academic leadership to the role. Her extensive history with the organization and experience working with students, educators, and community partners position her to lead the Center's growing portfolio of programs and initiatives.

"I'm excited to join the team at West Piedmont Higher Education Center," Randall said. "I look forward to working with our community, partners, and individuals to strengthen educational opportunities and pathways for our constituents."

Dr. Randall is no stranger to the center. Prior to becoming Chief Program Officer, Dr. Randall served as Coordinator of Education Programs for Longwood University at New College Institute (now West Piedmont Higher Education Center) and as Coordinator of Elementary and Middle Education. She has also served as an Assistant Professor since 2021 and previously worked as an adjunct faculty member from 2011 to 2019, gaining tenure with Longwood. Her career has focused on education, program development, and creating opportunities for students and educators.

In her new role, Dr. Randall will provide strategic leadership and oversight for the center's programs, helping guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of initiatives that connect higher education, workforce development, industry, and community needs throughout Southern Virginia.

As a member of the executive team, Dr. Randall will also play an important role in shaping the Center's strategic direction and advancing the organization's mission as it continues to grow under its new identity as West Piedmont Higher Education Center.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Randall to our team," said Joe Sumner, Executive Director of West Piedmont Higher Education Center. "Our programs are at the heart of what we do, and having dedicated leadership focused on their continued development and impact will be incredibly valuable as the Center moves forward. Dr. Randall brings a perspective and expertise that will help us identify new opportunities, strengthen existing programs, and build partnerships that benefit the communities we serve."

In addition to its new Chief Program Officer, the center recently welcomed Karen Otterstein as Procurement Specialist, Tamara Scott as Testing Center Support Specialist, and Stephen Childers as Facilities Coordinator.

LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE
PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AUGUST 19, 2026 - 4:00 PM - 55 W. CHURCH STREET, MARTINSVILLE, VA, 24112
MARTINSVILLE CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING - COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SEPTEMBER 8, 2026 - 7:00 p.m. - 55 W. CHURCH STREET, MARTINSVILLE, VA, 24112
(SHOULD COUNCIL CHAMBERS BE UNAVAILABLE, CITY COUNCIL WILL MEET SEPTEMBER 8, 2026 - 7:00 p.m. - 1 ELLSWORTH STREET, MARTINSVILLE, VA, 24112 - FIND ALL UPDATES ONLINE: https://www.martinsville-va.gov/)

Notice is hereby given that the City of Martinsville Planning Commission and the City of Martinsville City Council will conduct a public hearing at their respective dates and times on the following item. All interested parties are encouraged to present their views at these series of public hearings to be held separately.

The Commission and the City Council will receive and consider public input regarding the draft Comprehensive Plan. The state-mandated Comprehensive Plan is the City's key policy document for land use, development, housing, infrastructure, transportation, and related economic and social issues. A complete draft of the plan may be examined at the City of Martinsville Community Development Office at 55 W. Church Street, Room 217, Martinsville, VA, 24112 and is also available online at: https://www.martinsvilleva.gov/567/Martinsville-Momentum-2026-Comprehensive.

This Comprehensive Plan Amendment repeals and replaces the adopted 2021 Comprehensive Plan in its entirety. Content, maps, goals, objectives, and strategies for all chapters have been revised and/or replaced in entirety to address key issues and priorities identified through public outreach and to comply with the Code of Virginia. The revised plan consists of the following chapters: 1) Establishing Momentum, describing the Comprehensive Plan purpose and process; 2) Building Momentum, describing the strategic framework that translates Martinsville's vision into actionable priorities and implementation strategies. 3) Natural & Historic Resources, describing policy framework for preserving Martinsville's natural, historic, and cultural assets while advancing sustainability, resiliency, and heritage-based community development; 4) Community Health & Safety, describing policies and strategies to promote public health, enhance community safety, and improve residents' overall quality of life through coordinated services, resilient infrastructure, and equitable access to essential resources; 5) Community Facilities & Infrastructure, describing strategies for ensuring reliable, resilient, and well-maintained community facilities and infrastructure that support current residents and future growth; 6) Economic & Workforce Development, describing policy framework for promoting sustainable economic development, supporting workforce growth, and expanding opportunities for businesses and residents; 7) Housing & Neighborhoods, describing strategies to expand housing opportunities, and promote safe, attractive, and sustainable neighborhoods throughout Martinsville; 8) Mobility & Transportation, describing policies and strategies to improve Martinsville's transportation network by enhancing connectivity, accessibility, safety, and mobility for all users; 9) Future Land Use, describing a community-centered vision for how the City will evolve over time by enhancing quality of life, improving access to essential services, and preserving the character and natural-beauty that makes Martinsville unique; and 10) Maintaining Momentum, describing the implementation framework for translating the Comprehensive Plan into action through coordinated responsibilities, prioritized initiatives, and ongoing performance monitoring.

Both the Planning Commission Meeting and the City Council meeting will be held in Council Chambers of the City Municipal Building at 55 W. Church Street, Martinsville, VA, 24112, in a public facility believed to be accessible to persons with disabilities. Any person with questions on the accessibility of the facility should contact the Community Development office at 55 W. Church Street, Room 217, Martinsville, Virginia or by email at hpowell@martinsvilleva.gov.

If you cannot make it to the public hearing but would still like to submit a public comment, you can submit them electronically by emailing them to: hpowell@martinsvilleva.gov.

Veterans invited to Summer VetFest

The Salem VA Health Care System will hold a Summer VetFest Veteran Enrollment Fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 29, at the Salem VA Medical Center, 1970 Roanoke Blvd., Salem.

The event is open to veterans, their family members and caregivers and will offer access to VA health care and benefits, including same-day services.

Veterans can enroll in VA health care at the event and, after enrolling, receive an initial primary care appointment with a VA doctor the same day. Veterans should bring their DD-214, a valid photo ID and insurance information.

Veterans also can file a benefits claim or check the status of an existing claim. Veterans Benefits Administration representatives will be available for one-on-one claims counseling.

Other services will include toxic exposure screenings, private mental health support and information about VA programs, including women's health, homeless care and housing, suicide prevention, caregiver support, social work, Whole Health, Roanoke Vet Center support and volunteer opportunities.

"A key part of fulfilling our mission is ensuring that Veterans within our community receive the health care they have earned for serving our nation," said Tammy Snyder, executive director of the Salem VA Health Care System. "This engaging, accessible event allows Veterans to easily connect with our team to access the care and benefits they deserve. They served us, now it's our duty and honor to serve them."

Veterans can complete an online VA health care enrollment form before the event to help with the enrollment process, although completing the form is not required.

Complimentary summer picnic food, snacks and drinks will be available.

Submit your community news and photos to dhall@theenterprise.net

Bassett

(cont. from page 1)

for more than 40 years and read less like a company bulletin and more like a small-town newspaper.

"The Pioneer covered far more than company news. Weddings, births, and deaths of employees and their relatives filled its pages, alongside the usual milestones and announcements, making it an unexpected goldmine for anyone researching the families who built their lives around the company and the town," Doss said.

He started small, pulling scans of photos featuring his grandfather and mother. Then co-worker Michael Taylor raised a simple question that changed everything, including scanning and uploading.

"I am a second generation Bassett Furniture employee, and while I was looking through the Bassett Pioneer I found baby pictures of myself and photos of both of my parents, as well as photos of my friends' parents. As I began sharing some of these photos around, I realized the positive impact it could have. My friends loved seeing photos of their parents at work and being younger," said Taylor.

From that point, Doss was all in. He scanned through mornings, lunch and his afternoons to preserve the documents. The Pioneer's pages are legal size, each one requiring individual attention. After scanning, he would load the images into Photoshop, carefully straightening and restoring pages where age had dulled the contrast. He also built a systematic numbering convention for every issue, making the growing archive something he could actually navigate. Over the years, the issues became something more than a project to him, each one familiar and carrying its own small piece of the community's story.

The images eventually became the backbone of a Facebook group Doss created called "Bassett - Looking back. Moving forward." The page today counts more than 14,000 members. In the early days especially, the Pioneer photos were what kept people coming back.

"The Facebook group took off pretty quickly. At the time, there was no dedicated Bassett history page, so it was well-received. Many of the first to join were excited to see photos of themselves and their relatives on the job at Bassett Furniture," said Taylor.

That connection was tested in 2020, when Doss was hospitalized with pneumonia for two weeks. Taylor, who knew where Doss kept the external drive holding all the scanned images, stepped up and kept the Facebook group running in his absence.

"In 2020, Andy was down pretty bad in the hospital and unable to make posts. Our group users were accustomed to regular history posts, so I couldn't let them all down. I went through the archives which Andy had scanned to find photos which had not been posted yet and scanned some of my own issues of the Bassett Pioneer, which had not been digitized. One such topic was very relevant; Andy was in the hospital in March 2020, around the time COVID-19 exploded. In one of the pioneers I found a photo of Paul Foley receiving his flu shot from Dr. John P. Bing in 1969. Content like kept the group going even while Andy was unable to post."



Images of factory workers, like the one of Doss' grandfather, Wilbert Stone, can be found throughout the 20 years of issues. (Contributed)

When Doss returned and picked the project back up, he noticed something troubling — holes in the archive where issues should have been. He brought the problem to his Facebook community, and they came through. Members made their way to the main office and dropped off their personal copies in person, filling the gaps one by one until at least 30 years of the Bassett Pioneer were fully intact.

With the archive in good shape and Bassett's 125th anniversary on the horizon in 2027, Doss and company leadership agreed the time was right to give the collection a real public home. He contacted Kelley Ewing, senior cataloger for the Virginia Chronicle newspaper program at the Library of Virginia, who was excited about both the collection and the fact that the scanning work was already done.

"That meant the library's contractor could move straight to OCR without starting from scratch. Twenty years of the Bassett Pioneer are now live on the Virginia Chronicle, fully searchable by name, place, and keyword, putting decades of Henry County history at the fingertips of former employees, their families, and descendants for the first time," Doss said, adding that he hopes to add another decade of scans in the years ahead.

The reach of Bassett Furniture's story, Doss has come to understand, stretches far beyond the town that shares its name. Generations of families have scattered across the country since their grandparents and great-grandparents worked the factory floors, carrying that history with them without always having a way to connect back to it. He hopes the Bassett Pioneer on Virginia Chronicle serves as that bridge, a way for people who may have never set foot in Bassett to find a grandfather's name, a family wedding announcement or a photo that brings an old story to life.

17th annual Smith River cleanup removes 1,650 pounds of litter



A volunteer showing their bounty from the Smith River during the 17th Annual Smith River Cleanup on August 15, 2026. Volunteers worked from boats to help keep the river and watershed healthy.



The whole crew of volunteers gather at the Smith River Sports Complex to begin the 17th Annual Smith River Cleanup on August 15. (Courtesy of DRBA)

Volunteers came together Saturday for the 17th Annual Smith River Cleanup, removing 1,650 pounds of litter and debris from the Smith River and surrounding roadsides.

The annual cleanup is a partnership between the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) and Henry County, Virginia. This year, 40 volunteers participated in land and water crews, working along the river, roadsides and tributaries that feed into the Smith River. Volunteers removed litter and debris from approximately 5 miles of land and 7 miles of river during the event.

Volunteers who brought their own boats paddled sections of the river to collect trash, while land crews focused on roadsides and tributaries. Volunteers were provided gloves and grabbers, safety gear, snacks and water for participants.

This year, DRBA and Henry County launched a new trial initiative to increase the amount of collected material that can be recycled. EMI Recycling partnered with DRBA and Henry County to make the sorting effort possible and Cunningham Tires handled tires collected during the cleanup.

"We are thrilled to have another impactful cleanup on our beautiful river and are grateful that the community understands the implications of littering in our waterways by showing up to volunteer," said Anna Wheeler, DRBA Recreation & Stewardship Manager. "We have continued to see less trash in our waterways thanks to our partners and volunteers and due to an increase in environmental education in our water basin."

"This event is always a great reminder of what we can accomplish when we come together for a common purpose," said Tracy McKoy, Henry County Beautification Coordinator. "We appreciate everyone who gave their time and energy to help keep the Smith River and our roadsides clean. The Henry County Adult Detention Center workforce also contributed to this year's cleanup and we are grateful for their support and willingness to be part of an effort that benefits our entire community."



After hours of work, volunteers enjoy a free lunch and raffle prizes donated by local businesses and organizations. The lunch was provided by Hugo's Restaurant and Sports Bar and sponsored by Lawless Welding.

Volunteers were also treated to a free lunch from Hugo's Restaurant and Sports Bar sponsored by Lawless Welding who also brought a team of volunteers called the Trash Pandas. Participants were entered into a raffle featuring prizes donated by local businesses and organizations.

This year's raffle donations included a kayak, paddle and personal flotation device from EMI Recycling; four single-day passes from Rooster Walk Music & Arts Festival; ten admission tickets and a family membership with a behind-the-scenes tour from the Virginia Museum of Natural History; a birdhouse from Ace Heritage Home Center; four Henry County Fair tickets from Henry County Parks and Recreation; a Little Gem Magnolia from Lewis Nursery; gift cards from Railway Café and Hugo's; a cooler donated by Lisa Simmons; and swag bags courtesy of Visit Martinsville, Henry County, Virginia Cooperative Extension and DRBA.

The 2026 cleanup adds to the event's long history of removing litter from the Smith River watershed. Over the years, volunteers have removed an estimated 35,000+ pounds, or nearly 18 tons, of trash during the annual cleanup. The cleanup event is always scheduled the week before the Smith Riverfest.

"It has been so rewarding to get out on the river and see the difference we can make in just a few hours," said Monique Holland from Martinsville, VA. "It's great to spend the day with other people who care about keeping our shared watershed healthy, and most people understand that by protecting our waterways and land here in Martinsville and Henry County, we're also making a difference for everyone who lives downstream. Everyone lives downstream from someone."

DRBA's mission is to protect and promote the Dan River Basin through recreation, education and stewardship. Learn more at danriver.org.

United Way

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Volunteers worked on several community projects last year: Packing food boxes, gardening and everything in between. (Contributed)

"This will be our 28th annual Day of Action. So I guess that puts us at about 1998, is when we first started doing our Day of Action projects here locally. Our United Way has been serving the Martinsville Henry County community since 1937. So we're on year 89 of serving our community," Conter said.

Among the projects this year are work at a Fostering Champions transition home, a cleanup along the Dick & Willie Trail, improvements at the Harrison Home for Adults and cleanup work at the Pregnancy Center.

The Dick & Willie project has already reached capacity, but volunteers are still needed for other projects.

At the Harrison Home for Adults on Fayette Street, volunteers will help with interior painting to brighten the historic building.

The Pregnancy Center is seeking volunteers for basic housekeeping and is also collecting diapers, formula, baby wipes and other baby items for families needing additional support. That project is limited to about eight volunteers.

Day of Action also will include item drives supporting local organizations.

Volunteers who register for the Sept. 18 event will receive a free T-shirt and are invited to a complimentary breakfast from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. at the West Piedmont Higher Education Center, formerly New College Institute, at 191 Fayette St.

Registration is required and individuals or teams can sign up for available projects through EngageHCM.org.

The Day of Action also marks the kickoff of the United Way's 2026-27 fundraising campaign, which has a goal of raising $500,000 to support more than 25 local partner agencies and programs focused on health, youth opportunity and financial stability.



Some of the volunteers who registered last year. (Contributed)

Residents can support the campaign by donating online, participating in workplace payroll giving or mailing pledges to United Way of Henry County and Martinsville, P.O. Box 951, Martinsville, VA 24114.

For more information about the Day of Action or the fundraising campaign, contact Conter at 276-638-3946, ext. 110, or Rebecca@UnitedWayofHCM.org.

Reynolds Homestead opens applications for Leadership Patrick County Class of 2027





In partnership with the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Tech's Reynolds Homestead recently announced that applications for Leadership Patrick County are now available. The program is a perfect fit for emerging leaders, residents new to the community, those working in public service or private sectors, and any professional interested in deepening their understanding of Patrick County's assets and challenges.

The multi-month professional development opportunity invites up to 12 individuals to enhance leadership skills, civic connection, and community knowledge. Orientation is scheduled for Sept. 8 at the Reynolds Homestead in Critz, and the cohort will meet once a month until June 2027.

Participants will travel to different communities in the county to visit businesses, historical sites, nonprofit organizations, and schools and learn about the incredible opportunities in and around the county as well as specific needs in each community. Additionally, cohort members will attend a community meeting to gain a greater perspective of government and other organizations committed to improving the lives of Patrick County residents.

As individuals move through the program, they will collaborate with their team to implement a community project to address an identified need. Participants should expect to gain skills in team building, collaboration, consensus building, design thinking, and project management. An overnight trip to Richmond provides an opportunity to tour the Capitol, attend sessions, meet their senator and delegate, and enjoy a meal with members of the Reynolds family.

Learn more about the program and download the application at bit.ly/rhlpc2027. Information may also be found in hard copy at the Reynolds Homestead and Patrick County Chamber of Commerce. All applications should be submitted by Sept. 1 and orientation will be Sept. 8.

Tuition for Leadership Patrick County is $300; Patrick County Chamber members are $250. Tuition covers all materials, some meals, and travel. Full payment or arrangement for payment should be made upon acceptance. Scholarship funding is available, please request more information if needed.

Any individual or business owner looking for an incredible professional development opportunity for themselves or an employee should consider applying today. Contact Melanie Gilbert at mtgilbert68@vt.edu with questions.

Stair

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to 45 people show up."

The event was moved to Martinsville Speedway last year, when more than 200 people participated.

"Eighty percent plus finished the whole thing. This isn't a race. Come do what you can," Rodgers said, but participants do not have to complete the entire climb to take part.

"We had an 88-year-old who came and just wanted to climb one flight of stairs," Rodgers said.

Because participants will climb the equivalent of the Twin Towers, Rodgers said the configuration of the speedway grandstand makes the climb particularly challenging, with participants climbing the grandstand approximately one and one-half times.

"None of the steps are the same size as the heights. It's a lot more challenging at the speedway as opposed to one of the high schools," Rodgers said.

Local businesses have provided significant support for the event.

"We are seeing so much community support through businesses. We are so appreciative," Rodgers said.

Registration is $25 and includes an event shirt for participants who register by Aug. 20.

The climb will begin at 10 a.m. at the Martinsville Speedway grandstand at the Turn Four Gate, 340 Speedway Road, Ridgeway.

The event is untimed, and participants are encouraged to move at their own pace.

Spectators are welcome, but only registered participants may access the grandstand for the climb.

Registration also will be accepted the day of the event, although participants must register by Aug. 20 to be guaranteed an event shirt.

For more information, contact Rodgers at 276-340-1538.

All Vets also continues to hold its monthly walk in the park and has adopted a trail at Fairystone Farms Wildlife Management Area, where the organization encourages others to hike.

The organization also is preparing for its Veterans Day Honor Trail.

"Last year we had about 120 signs, and we have secured funding for 120 signs," Rodgers said.

The first year of the project focused on honoring living veterans. This year, the organization also will honor veterans who have died.

Local businesses team up for Ronald McDonald House fundraiser

By Jessica Dillon

Two local businesses have teamed up to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House in Roanoke through a limited-edition T-shirt fundraiser.

Tony Davis of Luna Moth and Michelle Draper of Brand Builder came up with the project after Davis and his wife, Amanda, stayed at the Ronald McDonald House when their daughter, Ruby, was born several weeks early and spent 16 days in the neonatal intensive care unit.

Davis said he was unfamiliar with the Ronald McDonald House before his family needed its services.

"I was unaware as to what the Ronald McDonald House was, did, or anything like that. But essentially, because our kid was at the NICU for 16 days and was from out of town," he said.

Without the Ronald McDonald House, Davis said he and his wife would have had to pay for a hotel while their daughter received care.

"We were able to stay there completely free of charge. Really, really amazing, amazing, nice people," Davis said.

The experience also made Davis more aware of the challenges families in rural areas face when seeking specialized medical care.

"I hate it. Absolutely hate it. Because, like, it's an unfortunate thing that a lot of rural areas are having hospitals completely closed down, let alone the maternity. My wife was in the situation where it wasn't necessarily an emergency C-section, but, you know, we didn't expect our child to be here a month early. Having the resources here, especially around town, while we were there, we met people from Martinsville, you know, and it's sad, the fact that, like, we don't have anything here to help our community."



Tony Davis and Michelle Draper created an exclusive shirt to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House.

Davis said the Ronald McDonald House helps families who need a place to stay for a variety of medical reasons.

"Even if you like you just have someone there that needs, you know, some type of procedure done, they provide that as well."

Davis and Draper had wanted to collaborate on a project before connecting over the fundraiser.

"I've helped out in the past with mental health stuff. It becomes a need that you don't necessarily realize that is needed until it's in your face," Davis said.

Davis credited Draper with developing the fundraiser's website and helping organize the project.

"Michelle was the one who came up with the website, came up with the idea of like, hey, we can do it like this. This is how much it'll be. And then I think they charge like $100 or something like that for the website. They're doing it completely free of charge. Um, they are providing all the shirts and stuff. Like they're, they're amazing."

The shirts are available through Luna Moth's online store. The fundraiser runs for 16 days, matching the number of days Ruby spent in the NICU.

Adult shirts start at $15. All profits support the Ronald McDonald House. Shirts can be picked up in person. Order at omglunamothtattoo.itemorder.com/shop/home/.

"I just want to try and provide a lot of money to go towards the Ronald McDonald House because hopefully people here won't have to use it, but if they do, then, you know, we'll have the means to do so," Davis said.

Bikers

(cont. from page 1)



The opening ceremony before the Bikers for Babies fundraiser to benefit the Pregnancy Care Center of MHC. (Contributed)



Participants ended the ride at the Rich Acres Fire Station parking lot, and enjoyed a meal after the event.



Del. Eric Phillips, R-Martinsville, center, and organizer Patrick Rusmisel are pictured, along with Paula Wood, executive director at the Pregnancy Care Center.

weather was a little sketchy, but it cleared in time for the ride," he said.

Del. Eric Phillips, R-Martinsville, also attended the event and spoke about the proposed constitutional amendment concerning abortion that will appear on the November ballot.

Rusmisel said the organization had received more than $9,500 in supporter and sponsor donations by the time of the event, with more contributions expected.

During the ride, participants traveled from the Pregnancy Center, giving them an opportunity to see the organization they were supporting.

J. Santoemma, who also helped organize the event, said additional funds were still being received and counted Saturday and would be added to the final total.



Placemats on the tables recognized sponsoring businesses and other organizations that supported the event.

"I am truly blessed to be able to work with a group of people that care about expectant mothers and their babies. People who desire to be the hands and feet of Christ," Rusmisel said. "If you don't know about the Pregnancy Care Center, please look them up and see the wonderful work they are doing."

Norris Memorial Services
1500 Kings Mtn Rd.
Martinsville, VA,
276-638-2778
Visit our website for pricing:
www.norrismemorialservices.com
