



THE ENTERPRISE

Calendar	12
Church	9
Classified	10
Family Album	5
Obituaries	8
Sports	6
Viewpoints	4

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VOICE OF THE PEOPLE SINCE 1876 | Dedicated to serving the communities of Patrick County

Chicago-based company pays \$1.6 million for hospital property

By Taylor Boyd
The former Pioneer Community Hospital of Patrick County and property has a new owner, according to a deed filed in the Patrick County Circuit Court Clerk's office late last week.

Wolf of Wabash, LLC, an Illinois limited liability company, paid \$1,600,000 to purchase the property from Foresight HS Property Holdings - Blue Ridge, LLC, a Virginia limited liability company, according to the deed.

The assessed value was listed as \$4,534,300.

The 10.078-acre parcel is situated in the Town of Stuart and the Mayo River District of Patrick County.

The deed was prepared by Jason Alan Dunn, of Jason A. Dunn, PLC, a law firm in Virginia Beach.

Seashore Title & Settlements, Inc., also of Virginia Beach, handled the property's title. The deed was insured by Fidelity National Title Company.

This conveyance is made together with and subject to any and all rights of way, easements, restrictions, and

covenants within the chain of title.

Phillippe Joseph is listed as the registered agent for Wolf of Wabash, which became an LLC on February 23, 2018. The business's principal address is 401 N. Wabash Ave. Apt. 70D Chicago, IL 60611.

Attempts to reach Joseph on Monday were unsuccessful.

"I had no idea anyone was looking at it," said Brandon Simmons, chairman of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors. "I'm not sure what it will be used for, but I'm glad that it was bought since Foresight was looking to sell. I'm glad things worked out fine for them."

Simmons said he also hopes things work out good for the property's new owners.

County Administrator Beth Simmons declined to comment on the transaction.

Last year, Foresight offered to donate the property to the county in exchange for \$815,000, or about half of the costs the company had incurred. At the time, an April 2023 valuation was noted as the course of the \$3.9 million fair market value.



Benjamin "Ed" Pool was among the several residents to voice disapproval of solar farms.



Trena Anderson discussed her concerns and personal experiences.

Board approves solar siting agreement in 3-2 vote

By Taylor Boyd

After dozens of residents voiced their disapproval, the Patrick County Board of Supervisors approved the Fairy Stone Solar siting agreement with a 3-2 vote at its Monday, March 11 meeting.

The board also set the real estate tax rate to not exceed the current \$0.73 per \$100 of assessed value for the fiscal year 2024-25.

Brandon Simmons, chairman and of the Dan River District; Steve Marshall, of the Blue Ridge District; and Doug Perry, vice chairman and of the Smith River District, voted for the motion.

Clayton Kendrick, of the Mayo River District, and Jonathan Wood, of the Peters Creek District, cast dissenting votes.

According to Patrick County's Comprehensive Plan, solar projects are limited to 1,000 acres of the county's 486 square miles, or 309,120 acres.

Before the votes were cast, the board discussed the motion and its implications.

Kendrick said he doesn't want to see the county's beauty ruined.

"I was at a meeting recently in Critz at the community center down there. There was a lady there from New York, and she had married and" come to Patrick County. "They had decided, she wanted to stay in New York, he wanted to come to Patrick County," he said.

Kendrick said the man talked his wife into coming to the area one weekend to look at Patrick County.

"When they come up 58, not long about the Critz area, she saw the pretty rolling fields with the mountains behind them and she decided right then she wanted to move to Patrick County, and she did," he said.

In his mind, Kendrick said he was thinking about how the pretty green

(See Board p. 3)

The preliminary school budget may require more local funds



Hunter Meade and Abigail Lavinder spoke about the benefits of LEGO League.

By Taylor Boyd

The county's share of funding may increase by nearly \$200,000 in a preliminary budget approved by the Patrick County School Board at its March 14 meeting.

Schools Superintendent Jason Wood said the operating revenue for the proposed fiscal year 2024-25 spending plan is based on three different proposed budgets: the Governor, Senate, and House of Delegates.

The governor's proposed budget is around \$36.1 million, the Senate's is just above \$37.7 million, and the

House's is about \$38.8 million.

"Right now, the Governor has been given a compromised budget. We're just waiting to see what that will entail," Wood said.

School divisions are mandated to adopt a budget in March and present it to the local board of supervisors by April 1.

"So, that's why we're here. We understand by us not having the finalized, approved calculation tool that we will have to amend our budget, but hearing things from the Superintendent's Association, the

(See School Budget p.7)

Changing seasons and new beginnings



Spring appears to have sprung on Main Street in Stuart and other areas of the county, with visible blooms on trees, bushes and some varieties of flowers. (By Pat Delaney)

Lynn Foddrell and the Piedmont Blues to headline PCMA show

By Taylor Boyd

Lynn Foddrell and the Piedmont Blues will headline the Patrick County Music Association (PCMA) show on Saturday, March 23.

Sponsored by Edd Martin Real Estate, the event will be held at the Rotary Building in Stuart. Doors open at 5 p.m., and the music begins at 6 p.m.

Charlie Chaney and some of his music students will start the show during the 'Charlie's Corner' segment. JT Morrison & the Foothill Boys will then perform before the headlining act.

PCMA President Denny Alley said Foddrell and the Piedmont Blues are a famous blues and jazz group.

"You'll see pictures of where

they played at Carnegie Hall, and England, and wherever. It's all well-documented," he said.

Foddrell is a member of the Foddrells, a musical family dating back to the 1800s. His father, Turner Foddrell, was a singer/songwriter known for playing his acoustic guitar.

Admission is a \$5 donation at the door. Prizes will be awarded throughout the night.

Concessions will be available for purchase from the Patrick County Shooting Education Team, with proceeds going to teach children in the area firearm safety.

For more information or to watch past music performances, visit Facebook.com/PatrickCountyMusicAssociation.



Lynn Foddrell with the Piedmont Blues will headline the Saturday, March 23 Patrick County Music Association (PCMA) show.

Congressional staff set hours for March

Ninth District U.S. Rep. Moran Griffith's staff will travel to Henry and Patrick counties on March 27. Henry County's hours are 10 – 11:30 a.m. in the Henry County Administration Building, Summerlin Room - Board of Supervisors Meeting Chambers, 3300 Kings Mountain Road, Martinsville.

Patrick County's hours are 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. in the Patrick County Administration Building, Conference Room, 106 Rucker Street,

Stuart. In the event of inclement weather (heavy snow, sleet, icy rain, etc.), traveling office hours may be rescheduled to avoid putting constituents at risk. If a locality's schools are closed, then its office hours will be closed as well.

Contact the Christiansburg Office at (540) 381-5671 or the Abingdon Office at (276) 525-1405 with any questions or schedule an appointment time in the event of office hour closure.

Former president, halfway house sentenced

The former president and director of Secor Inc., a federal halfway house that contracted with the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to house inmates, was sentenced last week to 15 months in federal prison for making false statements and wire fraud. Secor, Inc. was sentenced to one year of probation.

Matthew Castle, 35, of Lebanon, Virginia, and Secor, Inc., through its counsel, pled guilty in November 2023 to one count of making materially false statements in a matter within the jurisdiction of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of the United States, and one count of wire fraud.

Secor will serve a term of probation of one to five years. Additionally, Castle and Secor paid \$208,105 in restitution, forfeited \$40,000, and paid an additional \$30,000 in fines.

"This sentence serves as another example to those doing business with the United States – if you commit fraud, you will be held accountable," United States Attorney Christopher R. Kavanaugh said. "As one of the first cases investigated internally by the United States Attorney's Office and our financial fraud investigator, this marks the beginning of a new era for corporate criminal enforcement in the Western District of Virginia."

According to court documents, Secor was a residential reentry center, commonly referred to as a "halfway house," for inmates from the BOP who were nearing the end of their federal prison sentences.

In 2018, Secor entered into a contract with the BOP that allowed some of the offenders under the care of Secor to be assigned to "home confinement," meaning those offenders resided at an ap-

proved residence not owned by Secor. BOP paid Secor one type of daily rate for offenders who resided at Secor's facilities and a different monetary daily rate for those on home confinement.

Under the terms of the contract, Secor was required to outfit home confinement offenders with GPS monitoring equipment so the offenders' whereabouts could be determined at all times. In addition, Secor personnel were required to personally visit each offender's residence on at least a monthly basis to ensure the offender was living at the offender's assigned residence, in a safe environment, and in accordance with applicable rules.

In fact, Secor did not outfit many of the home confinement offenders with GPS monitoring and did not conduct home visits as required. Nonetheless, Castle routinely completed documentation certifying that he had conducted such visits, and in an effort to make it appear that such visits had occurred when they had not, he would make notations such as "things were going well," and the offender "had no questions or concerns to address at the time."

Each month, Castle submitted fraudulent invoices to BOP for payment, and BOP issued payments based on their representations that Castle and Secor were providing home confinement services in accordance with the contract.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Attorney's Office's new Financial Fraud Investigator with assistance from the Russell County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Prisons.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Whit Pierce and Randy Ramseyer prosecuted the case.



Tourism Talks

Hello Patrick, March Madness is upon us. This applies not only to basketball but also to our weather! As I write this, we are in the low 70s, and there is talk swirling that we could have snow the week of this read. Wow, that is genuinely March Madness. I may be telling you my age since the weather seems to be the beginning of my talks. Still, being in tourism, we heavily rely on good weather for our fantastic outdoor amenities here in beautiful Patrick County.

I have a question for you, Patrick. Do you know what a "Fairystone" is? Do you know where we can find them? A Fairystone is a staurolite, a small gem or precious stone. Some are shaped like a Roman or St Andrew's Cross, but other variations exist.

Fairy Stone State Park gets its name from the iconic gems. It is an incredible State Park located right here in Patrick County. The "legend" of the stones is: "Long, long ago... as Fairies danced in the sunny glade in Patrick County, an Elf Messenger arrived with the sad news of Christ Jesus' crucifixion. The Fairies cried, and as their tears fell to the ground,

they turned into small gems in the shape of crosses!! As the legend goes, the Fairies disappeared, but the remnants can still be found today! I have unearthed them on field trips during elementary school and later in my adult life. I encourage you to take in the beauty of the park this year.

The park is well known for its 168-acre lake adjoining Philpott Reservoir. It is just minutes from the Blue Ridge Parkway. Attractions include cabins, a campground, group camping, an equestrian campground, a conference center, hiking trails, lake swimming, rowboats, canoes, paddleboats, kayaks, picnicking, and two playgrounds. Yes, Patrick, this is in our backyard; some of you have never been. So, plan a trip, get in the water, hunt for "Fairystones," and take in the beauty of nature.

The Park is just off Route 57, at 967 Fairystone Lake Dr., Stuart, VA 24171. It is one of those places that you should visit and tell your friends about. So, Patrick, "Come get lost and find yourself" at Fairy Stone State Park. You will love it!

James Houchins
jhouchins@co.patrick.va.us
Director of Tourism

Amid inflationary pressures, general fund revenues in line with forecast

General fund revenues for February 2024 remained consistent with the forecast, Gov. Glenn Youngkin said last week.

For the month of February, total general fund revenues increased 17.3 percent versus the same period last year. Year-over-year growth in February collection was affected by one additional deposit day due to leap year.

"The Commonwealth's February revenues show that our conservative forecast remains prudent as mixed labor market signals and the persistence of inflationary pressures continue to impact the outlook for interest rate reductions and the economy," said Youngkin. "As we continue to monitor withholding and non-withholding patterns, this month's report reinforces the importance of advancing a budget that does not raise taxes but rather empowers job creation and fosters a business environment that moves Virginia forward, not

backward."

"January and February collections were impacted by additional deposit days and the timing of payments from a small number of taxpayers. Taking these timing differences into account, year-to-date collections from core general fund revenue sources are generally in line with projections," said Secretary of Finance Stephen Cummings. "Excluding individual income tax non-withholding and refunds, which continue to be distorted due to payments and refunds related to the recently enacted elective Pass-Through Entity Tax, general fund revenues are 2.1 percent higher than projected through February."

Among the major revenue sources, net individual income tax collections, corporate income tax, and interest income are all higher relative to last year, while sales and use tax collections, insurance premiums, and wills, suits and deeds are all lower year-to-date.

Cooper resigns after seven months as head of EDA

By Taylor Boyd

Patrick County Economic Development Director Patrick Cooper will step down from his post after seven months in the role.

Monday, March 25 will mark his final day, said Cooper who started working in this role on August 7. He took the place

of Sean Adkins, who resigned earlier that year.

"After leaving the federal logistics field seven months ago, I realized how much I've missed it. I was approached by an employer in that field and was offered a position," he said.

Cooper accepted a position working with the federal government. His favorite thing about the current po-

sition was building the professional and personal connections he's made with people all over the county, state, and region.

He also feels "that seven months is too short to tell" if he made any headway with the Economic Development Authority (EDA).

"I have been very thankful for the opportunity to serve Patrick County, a place that I can now call home," he said.

Pets of the Week



This handsome red brindle male is outgoing and has a great personality. He is a real 'people' dog and loves to play.

This young cutie has 2 litter mates that were turned in together. They are all full of personality and are playful. You can see them live in a video on the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter (PCPAS) Facebook page or call (276) 694-6259 for more information.

To view available pets, visit the shelter's social media. There are many dogs and cats at the shelter that need homes and can be seen online. Adoption fees are \$10 and include spay/neuter and a rabies vaccination.

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Board

(cont. from page 1)

fields would look with solar panels covering them.

“That’s my biggest objection to them. I just don’t want the county to change,” Kendrick said, adding that he knows the county must progress, “but I’m against them.”

He also mentioned the ongoing bid for clean energy, and noted that Philpott Dam still isn’t producing electricity after a fire about 10 years ago.

Simmons said he also heard a lot of people say when they ride down the road, they want to see the beautiful fields and trees.

“The first thing I have to say for that is the people who have worked hard to afford to buy that and keep it all their life, you’re telling them that because when you want to see it when you ride down the road, they” can’t do that, “they have to leave that in trees and grass,” he said.

“Also, if we’re saying that we can’t do it just because of the sight of it, then we might as well go ahead and say we are headed for zoning,” he said. “Because if you can’t have this because you don’t like the look of it, then we’re going to have to take care of all the junkyards, all of the yards in Patrick County that have more than four or five cars sitting around that cannot be used.

“We’ve got here all of the barns and farms everywhere that have been torn down or falling in, all the dilapidated houses, all the business buildings that have been falling in for years,” Simmons said, adding there are few roads in the county one can travel without encountering something that’s falling in, junkyards, or an area being clearcut.

He also understands the concerns for safety, “but too, I have to say this. There have been board members for years, and also many other people that have sat in this very room that don’t like solar too, that have said they don’t want that, but they have many times, and I know the biggest majority of the county says every day, we have a cellular problem, we need more cellphones, more cell towers, more cell towers,” he said.

If one were to look online, Simmons said there is just as much, if not more, information about harmful radiation from cell towers than about leaking from solar panels.

“That’s the concerns I have. I understand them, but at the same time, just like with the view shed... it’s not fair for people to say, ‘You can’t have that on your land’ but we’ll let you have all of the junk” you want, he said.

Marshall said the cadmium telluride several people are concerned about is fear mongering that’s going to destroy the county.

“It’s in each one of these computers you see up here, it’s in your television if you have a flat-screen TV, it’s in every LED light if you have a flashlight,” he said.

Marshall encouraged everyone to read between the lines because others would amplify situations to make them sound worse and garner support for their opinions.

Wood said he spent a lot of time at college as a science-based major.

“I know as well as anybody else that you can look and find whatever you want to, to make the facts read your way. But I do not want that, and I don’t like the looks of it,” he said.

Wood said people can say the panels are going to leak or they are not going to leak, but they really don’t know.

“I just know they’re not going to be a benefit to our viewsheds,” he said. “And I don’t want to have to explain to my little girl that’s being born in July that your daddy approved to have that mess sitting over there on Commerce Street, (or) on Route 8 in Fairystone.”

Perry said Fairy Stone Solar must comply with a long set of requirements to set the projects up.

“At the end of the day, as long as they meet these requirements, again, how can we tell a landowner, ‘No, you can’t do this,’” he asked.

After the votes were cast, almost every member of the public left the meeting room while voicing their dissatisfaction with the motion’s passing.

“Remember this when the people turn their backs on you. Remember this. For those of you who voted yes, when we turn our backs on you. Because you turned your backs on the citizens of this county. We’re going to turn our backs on you, you’ll see what happens,” Leo White said while pointing at the board as he left.

Almost two dozen residents spoke



Denise Stirewalt, a former board member, used her time to finish Trena Anderson’s comments.



Jamie Clark cited his concerns about solar farms.



Malcolm Roach addressed the board.

during the meeting, primarily in opposition to solar. Everyone was given three minutes to speak to the board.

Trena Anderson said March 28, 1979, was the day that changed her life.

“This year’s the 45th anniversary of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant partial reactor meltdown. The reactor released radiation, and years later coolant from the damaged reactor was released into the Susquehanna River,” she said.

Anderson, who was fewer than six air miles from the reactor on that date, said those affected still suffer physically. In 1982, Anderson said it was discovered that highly toxic chemicals, some of which are used in the production of commercial solar panels, were illegally dumped into the Dauphin County Landfill.

“The toxins penetrated the groundwater as well as local waterways. In less than a year, six people living near” the area “were diagnosed with leukemia and other cancers. People died,” she said.

After investigations, Anderson said the landfill was closed, with wells and homes being condemned. The government also had to provide water to many households in the area, and in some cases, still does.

“Forty-two years later, many residents were forced to move due to the contamination and lack of clean water,” she said, adding many chemicals are still found in the area’s waterways. Swimming and fishing are still restricted.

Anderson said nearly every person she knows who lived in that area has become sick or died.

“I ingested all of those toxic chemicals in my water at the age of 22. In 1993, at the age of 33, I was diagnosed with a form of thyroid cancer that hadn’t been seen in anyone my age. Doctors were stunned, I had a total thyroidectomy and started treatment,” she said.

Last May, Anderson said she was diagnosed with another unusual form of cancer that is most likely due to injecting the toxic water between 1982 and 1983.

“One chemical released into the groundwater in Pennsylvania was trichloroethane, an industrial solvent which is found in most solar panels. If there is a fire at a solar farm, this toxin will be released. It will infiltrate the groundwater and the waterways. If this occurs, all of us living in Patrick County could be subjected to the hell I’ve dealt with for decades,” she said.

Simmons asked Anderson to wrap up her statement as she reached her three-minute mark.

Denise Stirewalt asked to be allowed to donate her time to Anderson to allow her to finish speaking.

“The rules we adopted in January say we can’t do that,” Simmons said.

“So, a rule is more important than the lives of children in Patrick County. Is that what you’re saying Mr. Simmons,” Anderson asked.

“No,” Simmons responded.

“Mr. Simmons,” Anderson said.

“No, I’m not,” Simmons said.

“I’m asking for some more time,” Anderson said.

“Well, I’m not giving it. Everybody gets “their three minutes,” Simmons said.

“You know, you’re pretty rude,” Gail Spencer said from the audience.

Stirewalt finished reading Anderson’s comments during her speaking time.

“It appears that some supervisors are more willing to trust and believe the solar companies than science and experience. The LLCs involved will



Nearly 100 people attended the March 11 meeting of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors.

dissolve and who will be responsible if or when an accident happens? Patrick County will end up paying for the cleanup, but at that point, it’s too late. Land, wells, and waterways will be condemned and unusable,” Stirewalt read.

The county’s grandchildren and great-grandchildren will get sick, and some will die, Stirewalt read.

“I am proof that many of these toxins can and do poison decades after exposure. This will happen because a small group of men felt they were smarter than everyone else. Money overcame common sense, poorly written ordinances were passed, taxpayers, voters, landowners, and concerned citizens were ignored by some of the five men who reigned over them,” she read.

Stirewalt also voiced her desire for the board to not approve any solar farm in this county.

Spencer spoke about those who do not want solar farms in the county allegedly being threatened and being the victims of vandalism.

“It has not happened, that I am aware of, to people that want the solar panels. This has happened to people on this side of the aisle. And you want to know why? Because we don’t act like that and it’s shocking to know that there’s somebody in this county that is acting like that,” she said.

Spencer said one of her best friends was threatened and had his truck vandalized.

“There is no sense in that and quite frankly, I’m calling them out, they’re cowards. Because the brave people in this room right now are the ones that had the sense to come in, speak their mind calmly, respectively,” she said.

“I know that some of our meetings have gotten disrespectful, but we did not feel like we were being listened to, nor did we feel like we were getting the adequate information that we wanted. We will not be bullied into this, and we will continue to push back on this if you all vote yes.”

Vance Agee, Benjamin “Ed” Pool, Tim Seeley, and Malcolm Roach spoke about the potential danger of cadmium telluride, which they said would be a component in the solar panels.

Pool also publicly apologized to Perry for “uttering what I consider a personal insult to Supervisor Perry” at a previous event.

Richard Landis and Karen DeCapp said the board has a responsibility to vote the way the people want, because they were elected by the people.

Jamie Clark, Noel Foster, Mary Beth Clement, and Crystal Harris spoke about how solar farms in the county will destroy tourism and affect the scenic view shed that draws in visitors each year.

James Bogle said he doesn’t want the county to pick up the cost of cleanup “because an LLC isn’t around anymore when we find out the project went south.”

Bogle said the board is the last fail-safe to stop the actions of the Planning Commission, which passed an ordinance he believes doesn’t cover all of the concerns that are needed to protect the county.

“If you rubber stamp what they did

and pass this ordinance, we’re going to have to live with the results. I’m not a gambling man, and I hope you’re not either because if you’re willing to gamble on a short-term profit against what may happen in the future for a hazardous cleanup, God help us all,” he said.

Anita Foley and Morgan Marshall voiced their concerns about the environmental impacts solar panels could cause.

Joe Cadrin said he believes solar energy is not reliable and LeeAnn Seeley said she believes energy costs will not go down with solar energy.

Mike DeCapp voiced his concerns about Fairy Stone Solar’s parent company Energix, and its numerous Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) violations in state water control law and regulations in multiple solar facilities.

Steve Ferring was the only person to voice support for solar facilities.

“This is going on private property. The property owner has the right to do with his property as he sees fit. We have no zoning laws in Patrick County, and I don’t want them because I might want to do something with my property that some folks may take umbrage at,” he said.

Kenneth Terry also spoke about how solar energy is against God’s order of things.

Norma Bozenmayer said her fear is not solar farms as much as the debate that’s going on and neighbors turning on neighbors.

“I’ve seen a total disrespect for elected officials and volunteers in public meetings, and I’ve seen threats to recall elected officials. This” divide in the community “is more concerning to me than any solar installation,” she said.

Bozenmayer said she feels if one is not supporting the anti-solar movement, they are perceived as the enemy.

“No one’s asking calmly, no one’s listening, and unlike other things in the county that I’ve seen, no one’s working together to solve the problem,” she said.

In other matters, the board:

- *Scheduled a public hearing on a cellular tower that will be installed at the Patrick County High School for April 8.

- *Approved a resolution to apply for funding through the Flood Prevention and Protection Assistant Fund (DS-FPPAF) for dam safety.

- *Approved an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding request.

- *Approved the meeting minutes.

- *Approved the bills, claims, and appropriations.

- *Held a public hearing on the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) proposed six-year highway plan.

- *Held the administrator’s report.

- *Held the supervisors’ reports.

- *Held from Anderson about censorship and the board’s need to listen to the people.

- *Held from Ferring about the county’s need for a purchasing agent.

- *Held from Kurt Bozenmayer about the divisiveness in the county regarding solar.

Internet Crimes Against Children

Recently, I attended a Republican Whip meeting where Tim Tebow and members of his organization stopped by to say hello to Members of Congress - Tebow was testifying the next day at a House Judiciary Committee hearing on child sexual abuse. One of the women who was with him was a familiar face,



Morgan Griffith
Representative

Camille Cooper, now the Vice President of Anti-Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation at the Tim Tebow Foundation.

When we first crossed paths, I was in the Virginia House of Delegates and Camille was working to help Bedford County Sheriff Mike Brown, who assisted with the formation of the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force Program.

The ICAC Task Force Program was formed in 1998 in response to the growing number of children and teens using the internet, the growing number of child predators using the internet in an effort to contact and exploit underage persons, and the explosion of child sexual abuse images available online.

The Program was started by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), which works in conjunction with a national network of coordinated task forces, made up of local, state, and federal law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies.

Today, there are 61 task forces throughout the country. Sheriff Mike Brown helped start the Southern Virginia (SOVA) ICAC Task Force when the Bedford County Sheriff's Office was selected as one of the first ten task forces in the nation in 1998.

Originally called "Operation Blue Ridge Thunder," the task force covered all of Virginia and West Virginia.

Today, the SOVA-ICAC Task Force covers from far Southwest Virginia to the Delmarva Peninsula on the Eastern Shore and north to Greene County.

Since 1998, the ICAC program has led to more than 134,000 arrests nationwide, based on complaints referred to the program. In 2019 (latest data available), the SOVA-ICAC arrested 291 individuals, identified and/or recused 129 child victims, and examined 745,911 gigabytes for digital evidence.

Though a real and ever-growing threat to our children, the internet and internet related crimes were still relatively new in 1998.

Knowing the importance of the task force, I fought to get funding for Sheriff Brown's program into Virginia's biennial budget.

This wasn't the first time I had done work to combat child sexual abuse.

In 1994, I started drafting legislation relating to civil commitment for sexually violent predators. Passed in

1999, the law allowed the state to hold certain sex offenders at psychiatric facilities after their criminal sentences if the offenders were deemed "sexually violent predators." However, the state did not appropriate the money for the program.

In 2003, I once again fought to get funding for the legislation. Joining me in this quest was then-Attorney General Jerry Kilgore and victim advocate Paul Martin Andrews. A native of Virginia, Andrews was kidnapped in 1973 at age 13, held in an underground box and sexually assaulted by convicted child abuser Richard Ausley for eight days. As an adult, he became an advocate for bolstering Virginia law for continued civil commitments for sex offenders after their criminal sentence ended.

Andrews testified about the urgency for civil commitment for sexually violent predators. Andrews spoke about how Ausley was scheduled to get out of prison soon and research data indicated he would offend again. Once the legislature heard Andrews' testimony, funding for civil commitment of sexually violent predators was passed.

Unfortunately, child sexual abuse and internet crimes against children are still a major problem in our society. As the internet has become more and more a part of our daily lives over the past 30 years, the work to protect our children on the internet remains important.

I continue to look for legislative solutions on the federal level to support victims of sexual abuse and protect our children. For example, I just co-sponsored a bill that would prohibit the importation or transportation of child sex dolls and robots. Currently, people are able to make physical features and "personalities" of robots resemble actual children, even taking their voice from social media to make the robots sound like the child. This can lead to an attitude of normalization for sexual encounters between adults and minors. This bill will help stop that practice and help protect our children.

I am also extremely thankful to the more than 5,400 officials who are part of the ICAC program. They work every day to put child predators in prison and help victims achieve justice.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, call my Abingdon office at (276) 525-1405, my Christiansburg office at (540) 381-5671, or via email at <https://morgangriffith.house.gov/>.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Middle East Peace Is A Myth

A two-state solution for Israel, a strategic U.S. ally, and Palestine most likely was permanently derailed by the Hamas terrorist attack of October 7, 2023, and the overwhelming Israeli response in Gaza.

The hatred of the Jews of Israel permeates Arab societies. A survey found 74% of Middle East Arabs hate Jews. This is prominently documented by the preaching of a Muslim cleric as follows:

Egyptian Muslim cleric Muhammad Hussein Ya'qoub stated Muslim's feelings in January 2009 when he said "If the Jews left Palestine to us, would we start loving them? Of course not. We will never love them. Absolutely not. The Jews are infidels - not because I say so, and

not because they are killing Muslims, but because they imitate the sayings of the disbelievers before. How deluded they are." Ya'qoub also said "The Jews are enemies not because they occupied Palestine. They would have been enemies even if they did not occupy a thing."

Israel must be supported so it can be prepared for ongoing conflicts and potential warfare.

The United States provides about \$3.5 billion annually in military foreign aid to Israel to support our strategic doctrine in the Middle East. Private U.S. citizens, including a few million Jews and about 60 million Evangelical Christians provide support to Israel.

Donald Moskowitz,
Londonderry NH

Benefit raises more than \$40,000 for Worley and Underwood



On Saturday, February 24, a successful benefit was hosted by the Woolwine Community Ruritans at Woolwine Elementary School to help with the medical expenses for Lauren Worley and Micah Underwood, two teenagers who were involved in a car accident on December 16, 2023. The teenagers and their families were able to briefly attend the event and express their gratitude to the large crowd.

The benefit began with an opening prayer by Shaun Draughn. The crowd was then entertained by volunteer performances by Michael Ray Fain; Mike Hall, Allison Harris, & Jackie Belcher; The Revelators; Voices of Praise, Fresh Harvest Praise Team; The Alum Ridge Boys & Ashlee; PCHS Praise & Worship; and Jordan T. Morrison & the Foothill Boys.

Three local hairstylists - Cricket Morrison, Lisa Jerecke, and Jessica Belcher - volunteered their services to give well over fifty haircuts. Eighty-six donated baskets were raffled off during four scheduled times. Roger Gammons periodically auctioned off baked goods between singing performances, and at the end of the night, forty items were auctioned off. Cafeteria Manager Ellen Hylton volunteered her time to head up

the kitchen group that prepared and sold over nine hundred plated meals. A variety of baked goods were also available for purchase. The Ararat Ruritans assisted by handling the 50/50 raffle.

The Woolwine Community Ruritans extend special thanks to the Woolwine Volunteer Fire Department, Smith River Rescue Squad, Patrick County Patriots, Floyd Ruritans, various Ruritan organizations from Patrick County, and the PCHS baseball team. Thanks to all those community members and businesses who made donations and/or volunteered at this event. Tyler Collins and Emily Shuff, WES custodians, gave their time to make sure the event ran smoothly. The Ruritans are grateful to Mrs. Jeannie K. Hubbard and the Patrick County School Board for the use of the building and grounds for this event.

A special meeting was held on Monday, March 4 with Micah's family, Lauren's family, Woolwine Community Ruritans, Smith River Rescue Squad, and Woolwine Volunteer Fire Department, to present to the two families with the \$45,900 that was raised at the benefit. The families chose to split the money equally for their respective medical and therapy bills.

PCCA hosts state director at March meeting

Patrick County Cattleman's Association (PCCA) held its association meeting March 14 in the Patrick County Community Room. Terry Amos, president, welcomed members and guests and discussed topics of interest. Everyone enjoyed a great meal and good fellowship.

Brandon Reeves, executive director

of the Virginia Cattleman Association, traveled from Staunton, Virginia and gave a presentation and also discussed the cattle market, marketing and Livestock Risk Protection program.

To become a member or be added to the mailing list, contact Kristy Hughes, secretary at (276) 694-3341 or Sandra Heath, treasurer at (276) 694-2911.

First round artists unveiled for Front Porch Fest 15

The first of three lineup announcements for Front Porch Fest, the annual 4-day music festival to be held Aug 29 to Sept 1 in Patrick County, were announced last week. Meeting the high standard of music offerings Front Porch Fest is known for, this lineup features an array of local, regional, and nationally known musicians. In addition to high quality music, festival organizers are curating a full schedule of arts, movement, and nature-based offerings, a wide variety of vendors, and engaging children's activities, ensuring there's fun for the whole family this Labor Day weekend at Front Porch Fest 15. General admission and VIP weekend tickets are on sale now at frontporchfest.com. Day tickets will be released this summer.

As always, the lineup spans musical genres providing something for all music lovers. Topping this initial line up is Larry Keel's Electric Larry Land - a collaboration of Electric Larry Landis, award-winning guitarist, and songwriter Larry Keel that creates what they call a sonic "groove-and-vibe machine."

All the way from Miami, Front Porch Fest invites Afrobeta to share their love of catchy songwriting, dancing until 5 AM, and Cuban pastries. Big Daddy Love returns to FPF once again with its blend of rock, bluegrass, southern soul, and psychedelic jams, and Erin & the Wildfire is back on stage with the band's pop, funk, and indie sensibility backing the expressive powerhouse vocals of frontwoman Erin Lunsford. The Jared Stout Band has a musical style that's as diverse as the Appalachian landscape they call home, seamlessly weaving Appalachian rhythms with bluesy undertones.

Seven piece Americana brass band The Judy Chops has become a staple on the FPF stages with its chame-

leon-like arrangements and modern take on vintage sounds. Jon Tyler Wiley & his Virginia Choir will light up the stages with their diverse and energetic sound, masterful musicianship, and captivating crowd interaction. Late night FPF favorite GOTE is back with a fresh, eclectic blend of originals and cover material. The soundtrack of your favorite daydream, Lua Flora delivers sun-kissed melodies rooted in the harmonies of Appalachia, rhythms of the West Indies, and lyricism of American folk.

Local groovy blues band, Slick Jr & the Reactors brings its unique perspective to the blues with a blend of original materials and classic covers. FPF is once again on the tour schedule of The Freeway Jubilee, a band built on unique collaboration, powerful harmonies, and lyrics that provide a window into the human experience. They're becoming known for their beautiful gospel set each Sunday morning of FPF. Energetic and quirky, Couldn't Be Happier is a folk-rock/Americana duo returning to Front Porch Fest, while seasoned FPF artist Oh, Christopher once again presents his soulful singer-songwriter style.

If Jerry Garcia and Tom Waits made an Appalachian music duo, it might sound a little like the Brown Mountain Lightning Bugs, which blends the traditional with the trippy to create original music which has been called folk(ish). Borrowed Earth collaborators Scott Eutsler and Chris Owens will bring their mix of originals and traditional and contemporary covers to Front Porch Fest for the fifteenth time, and Fluidity Performance Troupe will be back once again to lend their movement and artistry to the live music experience. Two-piece woman-fronted White Rose Motor Oil brings cowpunk and garage country to the stage.

Rounding out the lineup and the weekend is FPF Family All Star Band - a Sunday evening festival staple that evolves annually and is always a treat to experience. More bands will be announced in two more updates, but this first lineup has something for everyone in the family. Whether you have a favorite on the line up or you're down for some fresh tunes from singer-songwriters or big-name acts on tour, Front Porch Fest guarantees a rich blend of caliber and diversity in its musical offerings.

Tickets are available online now and guests can choose from 4-day general admission tickets or a limited supply of VIP tickets that include meals, drinks, FPF swag and discounts. Day tickets will be released in the coming months. Tent camping is included with weekend admission tickets, and car camping passes can be purchased separately. The festival is a family friendly event and children 12 and under are free but do require a ticket. The festival features delicious food vendors, tasty libations and eclectic and creative merchandise vendors to ensure an enjoyable weekend. Vendor applications are now open, and the festival is seeking volunteers for a variety of departments. For additional information, to see the lineup, and to purchase tickets for this unforgettable weekend, search for Front Porch Fest on social media or visit the website at www.frontporchfest.com.

FPF is produced by One Family Productions, a non-profit organization with the mission of promoting and supporting community enrichment and growth. Proceeds from this event are donated to local charities such as the Patrick County Community Food Bank and Caring Hearts Free Clinic of Patrick County. For more information, visit onefamilyproductions.org.

Patrick Pioneers

Reverend M.A. Stickley

By Beverly Belcher Woody

This week, we will look at the religious colonists that settled in Patrick County for a brief time in the 1920s. The colony was founded by Reverend Marcus Allen Stickley, who was born in Shenandoah County, Virginia in 1872. Rev. Stickley married Miss Nettie Cootes of Dayton, Virginia in November 1900. Rev. Stickley pastored several Disciples of Christ churches from Pine Flats, Pennsylvania to Rockingham and Shenandoah Counties in Virginia.

The Shenandoah Herald reported the following on June 30, 1922... "Convinced that modern life is corrupting and spiritually demoralizing and that church members themselves are not living up to the right standards, the Rev. M. Allen Stickley, until recently pastor of a group of churches of the Disciples of Christ announced today plans to set up a 'real Christian community' in Patrick County. Those who join in the movement, he said, intend to dwell together according to their conception of the manner 'in which the scriptures require Christians to live.' The leader of the movement has acquired a tract of land in Patrick County it was said, and the colony will start with about 50 members from Georgia, Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania."

On July 9th, 1922, the Lynchburg News and Advance went into greater detail about Rev. Stickley's mission, "Disciples of Christ led by Rev. M. A. Stickley who have conceived the idea of a Christian colony in the hills of Patrick County are beginning to take up residence in the Smith River Valley near Buffalo Ridge, the promised land of his followers. Nearly 200 acres of orchard land have been purchased by the followers of the minister, some of whom are reported to be wealthy and who contemplate building modern homes equipped with water, electric lights, and sewage. It is expected that before the end of the present year, fifty families will be living in the valley where they hope to live a life more nearly in keeping with scriptural edicts. They will build their own temple and schoolhouse and it will be a model Christian community. The disciples are drawn by a common purpose to get away from centers of population where they consider modern tendencies to be demoralizing."

Nine days later, on July 18th, 1922, the Danville Bee reported, "Rev. M.A. Stickley is on the ground

and making plans for the arrival of additional families into the Smith River Valley. Stickley is a frequent visitor to Stuart on business missions and shows an earnest purpose in endeavoring to carry out the old ideal of Christian communism. It is reported that the colonists are negotiating for the purpose of additional lands surrounding the property already acquired, which lies midway between Woolwine, Buffalo Ridge, and Elamsville. Stickley is described as a man with traits of leadership and a good deal of energy. The experiment is one which he conceived himself and his views have been accepted by a number of wealthy people, who are prepared to enter the colony. It is learned that each Church of Christ Disciples congregation is autonomous, and it is not necessary to secure the consent or endorsement of any parent body before the undertaking can be carried out. At Stuart, it is learned that the building plans will be delayed until next spring and that the colony will live for the time being in buildings already standing on the property secured."

The Shenandoah Herald reported on September 8th, 1922, that "W. H. Miller and Ben Dadisman from Stanley, Virginia are with Rev. Stickley in Patrick County doing carpenter work for the religious colony."

On March 6th, 1923, the Lynchburg News and Advance reported that Rev. Stickley had resigned from the Church of Christ at Shenandoah and relocated to Southwest Virginia.

One month later, the Roanoke Times on April 8th, 1923, reported that "Patrick County apple growers and tobacco raisers who have from time to time come in contact with the colonists say they have a tendency to dairying and they have already acquired some pure-bred sires. In addition, they are cultivating apple trees and establishing apiaries. The colonists are further described as being the best class of people, the men hard workers and the women are splendid housekeepers. The impression secured by those who have had fleeting visits with them is that they are thoroughly earnest people, deeply religious, practicing Biblical techniques in a literal way and giving every indication of being happy and contented."

This 1923 Roanoke Times article was the last time Rev. Stickley's colony was mentioned in Virginia newspapers. In the 1920-1950 census re-

MODERN UTOPIA IS SPRINGING UP IN PATRICK COUNTY

Smith River Valley the Scene
of Quaint Little Colony of
Earnest Workers

LIVE BY THEMSELVES:
THEY SHUN PUBLICITY

Visitors Declare They Are
Tilling the Land and Tak-
ing Up Dairying, Too.

The Roanoke Times, 1923-04-08, page 19.

cords, Rev. Stickley, his wife, two sons and their wives were living in Shenandoah County, Virginia.

On October 20th, 1950, tragedy struck, Rev. and Mrs. M. A. Stickley were headed to Charlotte, North Carolina to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with family members. A car attempted to pass a truck and clipped the left front corner of a Greyhound bus. The accident occurred just south of Roanoke on US 220, thirteen people were injured and Rev. M. A. Stickley and his wife, Nettie were killed. Rev. Stickley was 78 years old, and Nettie was 79.

Woody may be reached at rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com or (276) 692-9626.

Social Security Matters

By Russell Gloor, National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens

Ask Rusty – How Do Survivor Benefits Work for a Married Couple?

Dear Rusty: How does Social Security handle the death of one spouse? Say, for example, the husband receives \$2,000 per month in Social Security and his wife receives \$1,000 per month. How is the death of either spouse handled? Signed: Concerned spouse

Dear Concerned: Benefits to a deceased beneficiary stop as soon as Social Security (SS) is notified of the death (notification usually done by the funeral director who handles arrangements). Benefits are not paid for the month of death, only for the preceding month when the beneficiary was alive for the entire month.

A surviving spouse is entitled to the higher of two benefits – their own personally earned SS retirement benefit, or an amount based on the deceased spouse's benefit at death. In the example you cite, and assuming the surviving spouse has reached full retirement age (FRA): if the husband dies first the wife will receive the husband's \$2,000 monthly benefit instead of her previous \$1,000 amount. But if the wife died first, the husband would continue receiving only his \$2,000 monthly amount because that is more than his deceased wife was receiving. Note in either case, the

surviving spouse would be entitled to a one-time lump sum "death benefit" of \$255.

The surviving spouse would need to contact Social Security to claim the "death benefit" and - unless the surviving spouse was previously receiving only a spousal benefit – also to claim the higher monthly amount, if eligible. If the surviving spouse was previously receiving only a spousal benefit from the deceased (and not entitled to SS retirement benefits on their own), then Social Security would automatically award their higher survivor amount when notified of the death.

If a surviving spouse has reached full retirement age (somewhere between 66 and 67 depending on year of birth) and is eligible for a survivor benefit, the amount of the survivor benefit will be 100% of the deceased spouse's benefit. But if the survivor claims the benefit before reaching FRA, the amount of the survivor benefit will be reduced (by 4.75% for each full year earlier). The survivor's benefit reaches maximum at the survivor's full retirement age.

If a surviving spouse has not yet reached their FRA, and if they are entitled to (not necessarily collecting) their own Social Security retirement benefit, the surviving spouse has the option to delay claiming the survivor benefit until it reaches maximum at their full retirement age. And if the survivor's personal SS retirement benefit will ever be more than their maxi-

mum survivor benefit, the surviving spouse also has the option to claim only the smaller survivor benefit first and allow their personal SS retirement benefit to grow (to maximum at age 70 if desired).

With Social Security there is hardly ever a simple answer to a question but, in the example you use, if both are over their SS full retirement age:

- If the husband dies first, the wife will get 100% of the amount (\$2000) the husband was receiving, instead of the small amount (\$1000) she was previously receiving.

- If the wife dies first, the husband's monthly benefit will remain at \$2000, and he will get no increase in his monthly amount.

- In either case, the surviving spouse will be entitled to a one-time lump sum death benefit of \$255.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Springtime Allergies? Say "No" To Dairy

Most of us have a love-hate relationship with spring, am I right? The season brings some of the very best weather of the year to be outdoors. Whatever our hobbies are, the soft, cool breeze, coupled with warm sunshine motivate us to take time to enjoy outdoor activities and even invite friends to join. For me, flying remote controlled gliders is my go-to spring pastime. All of this is good and wonderful...but then there's the flip side of spring: allergies.

Allergies and springtime

Allergies can be caused by many different pollens throughout the year, but springtime marks an increase in blooming for the spring growing season. Grasses, flowers, various weeds, and trees produce billions of pollen spores per plant; thus, many of us have one or more pollens that our bodies choose to treat as allergens.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America reports that 8.2% and 8.4% of adults and children experience hay fever yearly. Pollen-based allergies aren't the sole cause of hay fever, but sadly household pets can be an initiator of hay fever. Various molds and dust mites complete the gamut of possible allergens.

What's going on?

Our immune systems are the heroes of our body's defense system. The immune system is one of the most complex systems in our bodies. It protects the body from infections by destroying foreign bacteria, viruses, and harmful environmental substances. When any of our own cells become ill and malfunction, namely cancerous cells, our immune system works to eliminate these abnormal cells.

Sometimes, when pollen enters our bodies by way of our (through our respiratory tract, our immune system reacts to the pollen, treating the pollen like a serious invader. Chemicals known as histamine are released to cause inflammation, which is what causes our allergy symptoms.

Symptoms of allergies:

- A runny nose,
- Nasal congestion,

- Watery, or itchy eyes
- Sneezing
- Also: throat irritation, fatigue, headache, hives or rash, asthma attacks.

These symptoms can really make everyday activities such as work, recreation, and social life a hassle to enjoy. More serious seasonal allergies can trigger asthma attacks in people with asthma; therefore, avoiding these allergy-caused attacks is very important. Everyone who suffers from allergies can attest to how frustrating and even debilitating the symptoms are, but there are ways to alleviate and avoid these allergens.

Weekly yardwork for me is a major chore during allergy season and being able to narrow down what causes my immune system to erratically react was step one on my path to relief. Grass clippings were my allergy trigger. Wearing a mask during yard work did wonders, it helps to keep the dust and pollen outside of our respiratory tract by blocking the entrance of pollen to the nose and mouth. After I finish work, I make sure to not bring any outside pollen on my clothes. During the summer, I make sure to jog in the evening when temperatures are slightly cooler and the pollen count is down, unlike the morning when pollen is at its peak.

Tips for controlling your allergies:

- Stay hydrated
- Shower after outdoor activity or work
- Rid allergens from your home: dust, pet dandruff, and mold
- Close doors and windows, especially during mornings
- Limit dairy intake; (dairy promotes mucus production)
- Limit sugar intake; (can cause inflammation)

Being aware of how dairy and sugar can affect my immune system and consequently, my allergies helped me to avoid hives during allergy season. Direct prevention, such as wearing masks, taking medication, and other steps helped limit my allergies, but nothing compared with what resulted from lowering my sugar intake and removing dairy from my diet. Normal

symptoms like congested sinuses and watery eyes were completely eliminated but most important was the disappearance of the hives that used to appear on my skin every morning.

The dairy connection to allergies

Dairy, such as milk and cheese can cause increased mucus production; while some studies argue that milk and dairy do not promote mucus production, other studies have prompted doctors to suggest to patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) to avoid dairy. The reasoning given for avoiding dairy in COPD patients is that the dairy causes increased mucus production and that because the lungs of COPD patients are unable to remove extra mucus, dairy should be avoided. There are some differing opinions regarding dairy increasing mucus production, but for me personally, no longer eating milk and cheese helped reduce my allergy symptoms.

The Lung Institute has provided details about increased mucus production for COPD patients that can be helpful for those who have allergies with elevated mucus production as a symptom.

One point about dairy for the lung patient was given, "During flare-ups, people with lung disease often experience an increase in mucus. As an alternative, try almond or soy milk."

Dairy products to avoid:

- Yogurt
- Ice cream
- Cheese
- Butter
- Buttermilk

Give it a try. Stop rubbing your nose, wiping your eyes, and clearing your throat, and get rid of the above items in your fridge instead. It could be your saving grace this season.

(Submitted by Betty Dean. Written by Justin Leal. Used by permission from www.lifeandhealth.org

Courtesy of LifeSpring – Resources for Hope and Healing Stuart, VA)

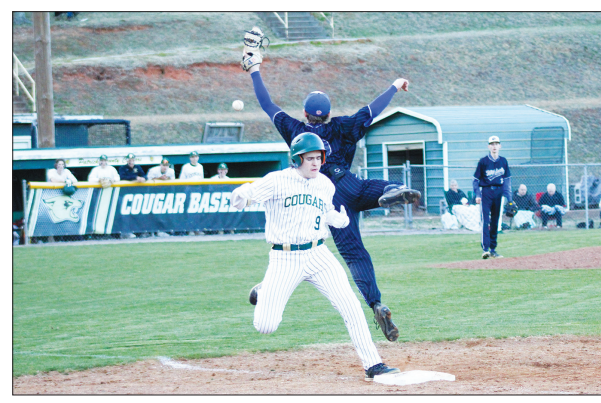
Cougars win season opener



Stuart Callahan pitched six no-hit innings in the win.



Jackson Horton celebrates an RBI double.



Easton Harris beats the throw to first.

By Pat Delaney
The Patrick County Cougars, behind a dominant pitching performance by Stuart Callahan, won their season opener against the Dan River Wildcats, 5-0 on March 11th.

Senior Stuart Callahan pitched six innings without giving up a hit, striking out 15 Wildcats while walking only two. "Outstanding," said Cougar head coach, Tal Swails. "That was exactly what we expected. He's capable of doing that every time he toe's it up."

It was Callahan who got the Cougars going offensively in the second inning. Following a walk, he stole second, getting into scoring position for Jackson Horton, who ripped the ball into center field for a stand-up double, scoring Callahan. An Easton Harris single moved Horton to third and an Erik Martinez-Tejada bunt got him home, giving the Cougars a 2-0 lead after two.

Tucker Swails got on base in the third after being hit by a pitch and promptly made the Wildcats pay for the mistake. He stole second, then third, scoring after the throw got away from the Wildcat third baseman.

Leading 3-0 heading into the fourth inning, the Cougars added to their lead. Gavin Fain reached second on a stand-up double and was driven in by a Tucker Swails single down the third base line, for a 4-0 lead.

In the bottom of the sixth, Calvin Lancaster smacked a double to lead off. Next up, Easton Harris beat out the throw to first on an infield hit, moving Lancaster to third. Martinez-Tejada hit a line-drive to the second baseman, but a Wildcat throwing error allowed Lancaster to score, upping the Cougar lead to 5-0 through six.

The Cougars sent out Tucker Swails to finish out the game in relief of Callahan, who had thrown 96 pitches in his six innings of work. Swails gave up a hit and a base on balls, but settled in, striking out three to seal the win for the Cougars.

For Coach Tal Swails, taking out Callahan was necessary, given the number of pitches he threw. "It's so early in the season, I almost pulled him the inning before, but he was still pretty good and hadn't gotten up in the zone, so I gave him one more, but it was time."

At the plate and on the bases, the Cougars showed their ability to manufacture runs by getting on and either stealing bases or letting the hitters move them into scoring position.

Coach Swails said, "we had to. We're not swinging the bats, it's early in the season. Our sticks are a little behind and that's normal this time of the year, so sometimes you have to manufacture runs. We've got speed. We can run. If we can be better bunters, we can manufacture a



Tucker Swails steals third base.

whole lot more." Leading the way for the Cougars was Tucker Swails, going 1-2 at the plate with an RBI, two stolen bases and a run scored. Jackson Horton went 1-3 with an RBI and a run scored.

Gavin Fain and Calvin Lancaster both went 1-3 with a run scored and Easton Harris was 1-3 with a stolen base.

Coach Swails was pleased with his team's performance on the night. "I'm very happy. We did a lot of things well. It was a good game for us. To come out and win, to throw a shutout, and score some runs on opening night, that's all we can ask for."

Lady Cougars top Bassett 11-0

By Pat Delaney
The Lady Cougars won their second straight game to open the 2024 season, beating the Bassett Bengals 11-0 on March 13.

"That was a good win," said Patrick County coach Ryan Pendelton after the game, noting that Bassett won both meetings with the Cougars last season.

It was Bassett who got off to a fast start with back-to-back singles in the top of the first. Lady Cougar starting pitcher McKenzie Holt, struck out two Bengals before loading the bases with a hit batter. Holt struck out the next batter, ending the inning and the Bengal threat.

In the bottom of the first, the Lady Cougars took advantage of walks and Bassett errors to take a 3-0 lead into the second inning, where their bats came alive.

In the second, Bryley Pike got things going with a single before stealing second and reaching third on a throwing error. Journey Moore crushed a two-run home run, increasing the lead to 5-0. A few batters later, Lilly Hazelwood hit the second two-run home run of the inning, giving the Cougars a 7-0 lead after two.

The Cougars put up four more runs in the fourth inning. Journey Moore reached on a long fly ball off the center field fence, and scored on a McKenzie Holt double. Maria Turner plated two more runs later in the inning with a stand-up double, increasing the lead to 11-0.

Bassett once again loaded the bases with two outs in the top of the fifth, but a Hayden Lawless strikeout ended the inning, preserving the shutout.

In the shutout, McKenzie Holt struck out seven in her three innings of work to start the game. Hayden Lawless pitched the final two innings, striking out two. Coach Ryan Pendelton said that the defense behind the Lady Cougar pitchers improved over their opening game. "I think we made four or five errors against Dan River. We cleaned it up a little bit today."



Journey Moore sends the ball over the fence for a 2-run home run.



Starting pitcher McKenzie Holt struck out seven.



Lilly Hazelwood is all smiles after belting a 2-run home run.



Bryley Pike makes the catch at the fence.



Hayden Lawless struck out two in her two innings.



Lauren Hazelwood races to beat the throw at first.

Varsity soccer season off to a strong start

By Ashlee Mullis
The Patrick County Girls Soccer Team hosted North Stokes on March 8, taking a 4-1 win over the Vikings. Kyra Titular had 2 goals, while Kendall Williams and Camille Gonzalez had 1 goal each. Cindy Leon-Cisneros, Titular, Jayden Diehl each had an assist, and Skye Ayers had 10 saves in goal. Dan River came to PC March 11, losing 0-4 to the Lady Cougars. Williams had 2 goals, and Gonzales and Titular had 1 goal each. Cisneros had an assist, and Ayers had 9 saves in goal.

The Cougars ended the week with a 4-0 win over the Lady Bulldogs. Williams had 2 goals, 1 of those goals coming off a corner kick. Titular had 2 goals



Kendall Williams kicks the ball down field. as well. Gonzalez and Raeli Moran had 1 assist each, and Ayers had 6 saves in goal.



Journey Moore took the win for the Cougars.

Softball Team Gets Win

By Ashlee Mullis
The Lady Cougars opened the season with an 8-4 home win over Dan River High School on Monday, March 11. Journey Moore got the win in the circle, going 5 1/3 innings, striking out 7 and allowing 2 earned runs. McKenzie Holt finished the last 1 2/3 inning, striking out 4. Lauren Fulcher, Moore, and Holt had 2 hits each. Bryley Pike scored 3 times with 3 stolen bases on the night.

School Budget

(cont. from page 1)

Virginia School Board Association (VSBA,) we feel that there should be a compromise between the two," Wood said.

As a result, the board is basing its budget on the Senate version, which is in between the House and Governor's budgets. The total budget is \$37,760,641.98.

Wood said the division maintained the federal funds, and "utilizing the calc tool, the county's share would

be an increase of almost \$200,000, from \$6.7 up to \$6.9 million, for the county's local match," he said.

In the expense portion of the budget, instruction costs make up the largest portion at 65 percent, or around \$24.5 million. Maintenance is \$3.5 million, or nine percent, and transportation is \$2.8 million, or seven percent.

Technology costs are \$2.2 million, or six percent, while administration is also six percent at \$2.1 million.

At \$1.7 million, food service is about five percent of the expenditure budget while facilities are two percent, or \$787,263.80.

Amy Walker, of the Mayo River District, asked Wood why the transportation budget is increasing.

"With more funds going into the instructional line, and also with retirement and attrition, we will not be replacing the few positions there," Wood answered.

Wood said besides the increases to instruction and transportation, the other categories stay relatively the same compared to the current budget.

"We are following VSBA guidance on how

we should allocate our funds within our budget," he said.

Wood also noted the 11 positions that will be lost at the end of the current school year.

"It doesn't matter which calc tool that the General Assembly approves, we will see a loss in funding that we have been operating under for the last three years due to federal grants," he said.

Wood said no current staff member who has been on a continuing contract will be losing their jobs.

"Those positions, those people accepted those grant-funded jobs knowing that the termination date was coming up when the grant ran out," he said. "I just want to reiterate that we had budgeted for the last three years over \$1.1 million in salaries that were federally funded, and due to our budget constraints, are not able to add those positions in our normal operating budget."

In other matters, the board:
 *Heard a presentation on the LEGO League from Hunter Meade and Abigail Lavinder.

*Heard the superintendent's report.
 *Approved the consent agenda.



*Approved the 2024-25 elementary student handbook.

*Approved the 2024 Federal IDEA Annual Plan/Part B Flow-Through Application.

*Approved the disposal of surplus property.

*Approved the personnel report as amended.

*Approved the RE2023-2024 14 & 15.

Lester Harrell, of the Peters Creek District, attended the meeting virtually.

PCHS Sports Schedule

The Patrick County High School Cougars Sports Schedule for the week of March 23-29:

- 3/25** 5pm Baseball at Bassett
- 5pm Softball at Bassett
- 7pm Girls Soccer vs Bassett
- 7pm Boys Soccer at Bassett
- 3/26** 4:30p Boys Tennis at Floyd County
- 4:30p Girls Tennis vs Floyd County
- 3/27** 4:30p Boys Tennis at Bassett
- 4:30p Girls Tennis at Bassett (Jaycee Park)
- 5pm Baseball vs Floyd County
- 5pm Softball vs Floyd County
- 3/29** 1pm Softball vs Staunton River (at Ben Franklin M.S.)

Chapter members assemble supplies for military



Colonel Abram Penn Chapter NSDAR members Beth Witt, Betty Banks and Sheree Russo assemble paracord bracelets which will be donated for use by the military.

CHILD FIND

In accordance with Regulation Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia, the Patrick County Public Schools wish to announce the availability of special education services for those children who qualify.

Special Education services are available in Patrick County Public Schools for those (age birth to 21 inclusive) who are eligible in the following exceptionalities:

- * "Autism" means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance. A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be diagnosed as having autism if the criteria in this definition are satisfied.
- * "Deafness" means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing with or without amplification, which adversely affects educational performance.
- * "Deaf-blindness" means hearing and visual impairments occurring at the same time, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational problems that cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or blindness.
- * "Hearing Impairment" means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance, but which is not included under the definition of "deafness" in this section.
- * "Intellectual Disability" means significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.
- * "Multiple Disabilities" means two or more impairments at the same time (such as intellectually disabled, blindness, learning disabled, orthopedic impairment, etc.) the combination of which causes such serious educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.
- * "Orthopedic Impairment" means a severe orthopedic impairment which adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g. club foot, absence of some member), impairments caused by some disease (e.g. poliomyelitis, bond tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g. cerebral palsy, amputations and fractures or burns which cause contractures).
- * "Other Health Impaired" means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette Syndrome.
- * "Emotional Disability" is defined as follows: 1) The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance: a. an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors; b. an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; c. inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; d. a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or e. a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. 2) The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disability.
- * "Specific Learning Disability" means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities or intellectual disabilities, or emotional disabilities or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.
- * "Speech or Language Impairment" means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.
- * "Visual Impairment" means a visual impairment that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.
- * "Developmental Delay" means a disability affecting a child ages two through six: 1) who is experiencing development delays, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and 2) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.
- * "Traumatic Brain Injury" means an acquired injury to the brain, caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Children who exhibit impairments in the above listed categories should be referred for possible special services. Those who qualify will be provided a free and appropriate education as specified under the "Individuals With Disabilities Education Act". Parents of children who may qualify for services under IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 should contact the school's principal or Mrs. Elizabeth Minter, Director of Special Education at (276)694-3163.

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Shirley Ann Ashburn Woods

Mrs. Shirley Ann Ashburn Woods, age 82, of Stuart, Virginia went home to be with the heavenly angels on Saturday, March 16, 2024, at her home surrounded by her loving family. She was born on June 21, 1941, to the late Archie Carlton Ashburn and the late Lena Velda Martin Layman. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Hassell Thompson "Woody" Woods; one son, Teddy Ray Woods; one grandson, Bryan Roberts; and one brother, J.C. Ashburn. Shirley worked for Blue Ridge Health and Rehabilitation Center in Martinsville for 25 years. She loved doing remodeling projects, her flower beds, and her birds. Above all, she loved spending time with her family and friends. Shirley will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her.



Left to cherish the fond memories of Shirley Woods are four children, Wanda A Celebration of Life

Memorial Service for Shirley Woods will be held Friday, March 22, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. at New Beginnings Baptist Church with Pastor Mark Wright officiating. The burial will be private. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the memorial service on Friday afternoon at the church. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Shirley Ann Ashburn Woods Memorial Fund, c/o Moody Funeral Home, P.O. Box 307, Stuart, VA 24171. Moody Funeral Home in Stuart is serving the Woods family, and online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

The family of Mrs. Shirley Ashburn Woods would like to extend their sincere appreciation and gratitude to caregiver, Danny Spruill and to the team at Mountain Valley Hospice and Palliative Care for all the love shown to Mrs. Woods during her final days.

Chevondia Gail Nowlin, age 55 of Stuart, passed away Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at her home. She was born in Patrick County on August 23, 1968. Miss Nowlin was preceded in death by her father, James Donald Nowlin. She was a member of New Hope Missionary Baptist Church. She loved music and singing, and especially enjoyed attending the annual Stuart Beach Music Festival.



Chevondia is survived by her mother, Gladys Moore Nowlin of Sandy Ridge, North Carolina; her step-mother, Marjorie Staples Nowlin-Hair-

ston (John) of Stuart; her best friend, Megan Greene; a sister, Tammy Graham of Wytheville; four brothers, Donald "Wimp" Nowlin (Summer) of Stuart, James "Rod" Nowlin (Michelle) of Linden, New Jersey, Ernie Nowlin (Nata-

sha) of Stuart and Travis Nowlin (Christina) of Hampton; and a host of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and other relatives and friends.

Funeral services for Miss Nowlin will be held Sunday, March 17, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at Moody Funeral Home in Stuart with Rev. Benny Redd and Rev. Robert Hairston officiating. Burial will follow in the Nowlin Family cemetery. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service at the funeral home. Online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

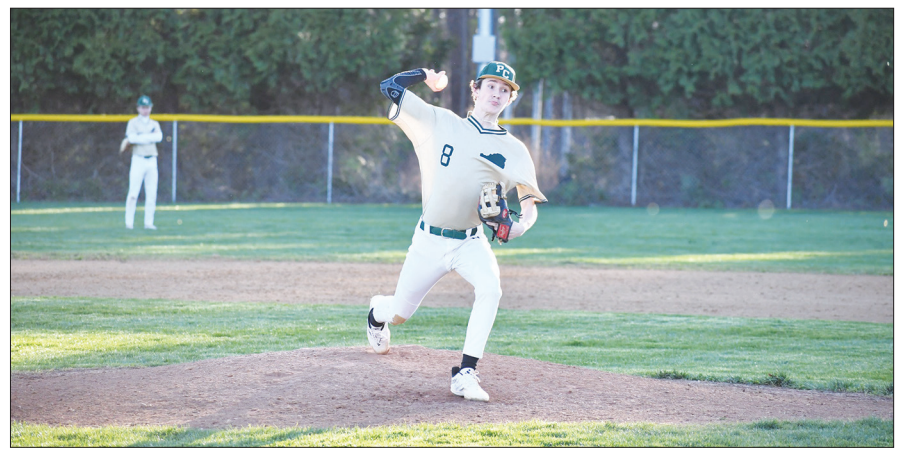
Miron Reba Smith Dellionback

Mrs. Miron Reba Smith Dellionback, age 98 of Ararat, Virginia passed away peacefully at her home on Tuesday night March 12, 2024. She was born March 28, 1925, in Patrick County to the late Henry Fultz Smith and Ida Elizabeth Puckett Smith. She was a faithful member of Raven Rock Wesleyan Church for over 60 years and was the treasurer for 40 of those years. Reba loved sewing and working in her garden. Mrs. Dellionback is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Brenda and Nelson Parker; granddaughters, Sherelda and Bobby Pell and Kimberly and Dwayne Knotts; five great-grandsons, Brad and Cynthia Pell, JT Jefferson, Jonathan and Abigail Pell, Justin Pell, and Nicholas



Pell; two great great grandchildren, Ryan Pell and Walker Pell; and several other family and friends. In addition to her parents, Mrs. Dellionback was preceded in death by her husband of 49 years, John Edward "Johnnie" Dellionback; two sisters, Perlie Irene Smith Gunnell and Alpha Elizabeth Smith Terry; two brothers, Lacy Jefferson Smith and Tyler Fultz Smith; and a grandson-in-law, James Corey Jeffer-

son. Funeral services will be held on Monday March 18, 2024, at 11:00am in the Moody Funeral Home Chapel with burial to follow in Oakdale Cemetery. The family will receive friends on Monday at the funeral home from 10:00 - 11:00am. The family would like to give a heartfelt thank you to all of the caregivers and to Mountain Valley Hospice and Palliative Care for all of the love and support given to Reba and the family. Flowers will be accepted, or memorials may be given to Raven Rock Wesleyan Church, 1912 Raven Roak Road, Ararat, Virginia 24053. Moody Funeral Services in Mount Airy is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at www.moodyfuneralservices.com.



Christian Hylton gets the win on the mound for the Cougars.

JV Baseball Opens Season with Wins

By Ashlee Mullis
The JV Baseball Team travelled to Dan River on Monday, March 11 getting a 4-2 win over the Wildcats. Christian Hylton went 3.1 innings on

the mound, striking out 7, allowing 2 hits, 0 earned. Noah Caine went 1 inning, striking out and allowed 0 earned runs on 1 hit. Greely Terry closed out the game, pitching

1.2 innings, striking out 2 and allowing 1 hit. Caine had 1 hit, 1 RBI, 1 run, and 1 base on balls. On Friday, March 15, the team hosted Martinsville, cruising to a 20-0 win in a shortened 3 inning mercy rule game.

Ethan Errichetti had 2 hits with 3 RBIs and 3 runs. Eli Bogle had 1 hit, 2 RBIs, and 2 runs. Greely Terry added 1 hit, 2 RBIs, and 2 runs. Mason Cassel pitched 2 innings, allowing 0 hits 0 runs, and struck out 4. Reid Corns took the mound for 1 inning, striking out 2, giving up 0 hits and 0 runs.

2024 Recreational Trails Program grant round open

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation is now accepting applications for \$1.9 million in Recreational Trails Program grants through May 7.

The Recreational Trails Program, or RTP, is a federal matching reimbursement program established to construct and rehabilitate recreational land and water trails and trail-related facilities.

The RTP is an 80-20% matching reimbursement program. Requests must be for a minimum of \$50,000 with a minimum total project cost of \$62,500. Grantees must be able to fund 100% of their project while seeking periodic reimbursements.

- Eligible applicants include:
- Counties, cities and towns
 - Park and recreation authorities
 - Tribal governments
 - State agencies
 - Federal agencies
 - Nonprofit organizations with support from a governmental body
- Applications are due via email no

later than May 7 at 4 p.m.

A virtual informational session and application workshop will be held April 2 at 1 p.m. Visit this page for more information and to register: dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/trailfind. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. An updated program manual, application materials and applicant resources are also available on this page.

For more information, email the DCR Recreation Grants Team at recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov.

Funding for the Recreational Trails Program is made possible through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration. Federal law under 23 U.S. Code section 206 mandates that 30% of available funding be used for motorized recreational trails, 30% be used for non-motorized recreational trails and 40% be used for multiple-use trails.

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Weekly Sudoku Answers

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

THANK YOU FOR READING THE ENTERPRISE

Former president, halfway house sentenced

The former president and director of Secor Inc., a federal halfway house that contracted with the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to house inmates, was sentenced last week to 15 months in federal prison for making false statements and wire fraud. Secor, Inc. was sentenced to one year of probation.

Matthew Castle, 35, of Lebanon, Virginia, and Secor, Inc., through its counsel, pled guilty in November 2023 to one count of making materially false statements in a matter within the jurisdiction of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of the United States, and one count of wire fraud.

Secor will serve a term of probation of one to five years. Additionally, Castle and Secor paid \$208,105 in restitution, forfeited \$40,000, and paid an additional \$30,000 in fines.

"This sentence serves as another example to those doing business with the United States — if you commit fraud, you will be held accountable," United States Attorney Christopher R. Kavanaugh said. "As one of the first cases investigated internally by the United States Attorney's Office and our financial fraud investigator, this marks the beginning of a new era for corporate criminal enforcement in the Western District of Virginia."

According to court documents, Secor was a residential reentry center, commonly referred to as a "halfway house," for inmates from the BOP who were nearing the end of their federal prison sentences.

In 2018, Secor entered into a contract with the BOP that allowed some of the offenders under the care of Secor to be assigned to "home confinement," meaning those offenders resided at an ap-

proved residence not owned by Secor. BOP paid Secor one type of daily rate for offenders who resided at Secor's facilities and a different monetary daily rate for those on home confinement.

Under the terms of the contract, Secor was required to outfit home confinement offenders with GPS monitoring equipment so the offenders' whereabouts could be determined at all times. In addition, Secor personnel were required to personally visit each offender's residence on at least a monthly basis to ensure the offender was living at the offender's assigned residence, in a safe environment, and in accordance with applicable rules.

In fact, Secor did not outfit many of the home confinement offenders with GPS monitoring and did not conduct home visits as required. Nonetheless, Castle routinely completed documentation certifying that he had conducted such visits, and in an effort to make it appear that such visits had occurred when they had not, he would make notations such as "things were going well," and the offender "had no questions or concerns to address at the time."

Each month, Castle submitted fraudulent invoices to BOP for payment, and BOP issued payments based on their representations that Castle and Secor were providing home confinement services in accordance with the contract.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Attorney's Office's new Financial Fraud Investigator with assistance from the Russell County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Prisons.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Whit Pierce and Randy Ramseyer prosecuted the case.

BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. Is the book of 2 Thessalonians (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Titus 1, Paul wrote that unto the pure all things are ...? Gold, Righteous, Worthy, Pure
3. What archangel is mentioned by name in the book of Jude? Gabriel, Silas, Michael, Melchizedek
4. In 1 Kings 21, who forbid Naboth to give his vineyard to Ahab? The Lord, Jezebel, Absalom, Balaam

5. Jared was the father of Enoch and lived how many years? 110, 450, 600, 962

6. In Psalm 103:5, what bird's youth is renewable? Dove, Eagle, Raven, Swallow

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Pure, 3) Michael (Jude 1:9), 4) The Lord, 5) 962, 6) Eagle

"Test Your Bible Knowledge," a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.

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Rev. Tommy Gosnell
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Worship Services 11 am

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Monday, Wednesday and Friday

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Reconciliation
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ACROSS

1 Wearing nightclothes, for short
6 Meanie's look
11 In addition
15 Eyelid hair
19 Steel, e.g.
20 Ancient Greek region
21 Empty spaces
22 World's fair
23 Illegal detention
25 Columbus is its capital
26 British actor Guinness
27 "Mind your — business!"
28 High, round collar not folding over on itself
31 Without any variety
35 Ingest
36 Boston NBAer, for short
37 Paint job made to look like marble, wood, etc.
41 New Nintendo console of 2012
43 Big antlered beast
47 Opposite of dep., in an airport

48 Thin porridge
50 Saw against the main grain, as wood
52 Bit of money seized by a Secret Service agent
58 Ecol. monitor
59 Middays
60 Tiny arachnid
61 J. — Hoover went on one in a 1991 film
70 Wombs
71 Bible book after Prov.
74 Q-V linkup
75 "Spider-Man" director Sam
76 Wedlock not based on love
79 Cheer up
81 Burros, e.g.
82 — occasion (never)
83 Paris' river
84 Toronto-to-Montreal dir.
85 Prada or Fendi replica, maybe
91 "Beloved" novelist Toni
94 Buc, Bronco or Niner
95 Beatty of film

97 Cindy Brady player Susan
98 Former jets to the U.K.
101 Bit of non-needed body art
105 Sour plum
107 Stage star Hagen
109 Title for Kate Middleton
110 Component of a coated glass-bead bracelet, perhaps
117 Even score
118 Forum attire
119 In the past
120 Apt cry of
121 Lion portrayer Bert
125 Coagulate
126 Rebuke from Caesar
127 Like a dweeb
128 About, before a date
129 At this place
130 Lather (up)
131 Gather up (never)
132 Hoodwinked

DOWN

1 Global finance org.
2 Teacher's union, in brief
3 Old TV ministry inits.
4 2002 "Friday the 13th" sequel
5 Whole lotta
6 Knightly title
7 Bulblike base of a stem
8 — cat (two-base game)
9 Neighbor of Minn. and Ill.
10 Jewish potato pancake
11 Relative of a guinea pig
12 Lion portrayer Bert
13 Feature of Betty Boop's hair
14 "— Mio"
15 Crude sheds
16 Car shaft
17 Project detail, for short
18 Sell at a pawnshop
24 Opponent
29 "I taut I — a pudgy tati!"
30 Shade trees
31 Flip — coin
32 DEA worker
33 Irish money
34 Bring about
38 Some flawed garments: Abbr.
39 Add-on to the end of a wd.
40 Bit of a bray
42 Most polar
44 Sea nymph
45 Sovereign
46 Letter two before iota
49 VIP vehicle
51 Margarine
53 Deprives of weapons
54 "Sorry, too busy"
55 Bodily digit
56 Big striped cat, in French
57 A/C output qty.
62 Landscape painter Asher Brown —
63 Like low-quality eggs
64 City transport
65 Alcohol in liquor
66 Landlords or landladies
67 Empty
68 Having protruding hearing organs
69 Yang go-with
72 Sings gently
73 U.S. pres., militarily
77 Inquires
78 "Continue"
80 Architect Maya
83 Chiang Kai —
84 Broody rock genre
86 Investigate pryingly
87 Very loudly, in music
88 Miami loc.
89 Stud money
90 Old Storms and Trackers
92 Paraphrase
93 On Sunset Blvd., e.g.
96 Two, in Chile
99 Maintenance job on a car
100 Indy sponsor
102 Ballet outfit
103 Something very easy
104 Vegas casino
106 Some Siouan speakers
108 MetLife rival
110 Concern for a dermatologist
111 Concern for a dermatologist
112 Horror film
121 The "S" of GPS: Abbr.
122 Hosp. zones
123 Ideal serve
124 Young fella

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AUCTIONS

EQUIPMENT AUCTION. 3/23/24 @ 10:00AM. 9368 Sandy Fork Road, Wilson, NC. Farm equipment, poultry equipment, backhoe, combine, implements. Contact Tony Stone: 252-399-9983. For more details visit StoneAuctionAndRealty.com

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G&E Virginia Premium Assured Heifer/Cow Sale. March 30th, 2024, 12:00 noon. G&E Test Center Gretna, VA. Call George Winn at 434-489-4458.

SERVICES

DIVORCE-Uncontested, \$475+\$86 court cost. **WILLS**-\$295.00. No court appearance. Estimated



completion time twenty-one days. Hilton Oliver, Attorney (Facebook). 757-490-0126. Se Habla Espanol. BBB Member. <https://hiltonoliverattorney-va.com>.

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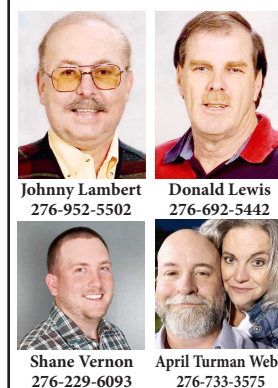
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Census of Agriculture reports Virginia's top producing counties

Virginia farmers earned \$5.5 billion from the sale of all agricultural products sold in 2022, and over half of that income was generated in the top 10 ag counties across the state, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2022 Census of Agriculture.

Conducted once every five years, the census analyzes land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures. Preliminary national, state and county-level data for 2022 was made available Feb. 13.

The top 10 Virginia counties based on the value of agricultural production are Rockingham with \$1.2 billion, Augusta with \$448 million, Accomack with \$326 million, Shenandoah with \$225 million, Page with \$205 million, Orange with \$142 million, Southampton with \$124 million, Northampton with \$109 million, Pittsylvania with \$100 million and Washington with \$94 million. Combined, they total \$2.97 billion in the market value of products sold in 2022.

Rockingham, Augusta and Accomack counties are regular leaders in agricultural production, with poultry and dairy farms serving

as "big catalysts for those farm receipts," explained Tony Banks, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation senior assistant director of agriculture, development and innovation.

Based on the market value of agricultural products sold in Virginia, poultry and eggs are the top farm commodities, generating \$2.23 billion in 2022, according to the census data.

Rockingham, Augusta and Accomack counties were ranked as the top three for income from poultry and eggs in 2022, with strong boiler production in all three counties and thriving turkey and table egg production in Augusta and Rockingham.

Rockingham and Augusta also rank in the top three counties for income from milk and cattle and calves.

"And when you factor in the number of crops that are grown to feed the poultry, dairy and beef operations—especially corn, soybeans and hay—it all adds up," Banks said.

In Accomack County, vegetable production is the second largest driver of farm income. The county is among Virginia's top 10 for soybeans and is ranked second for potatoes harvested in 2022.

Virginia's top farm income-earning commodities following poultry and eggs were grains, oilseeds, dry beans and dry peas, generating \$834 million; cattle and calves, \$695 million; nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod, \$399 million; and milk, \$354 million.

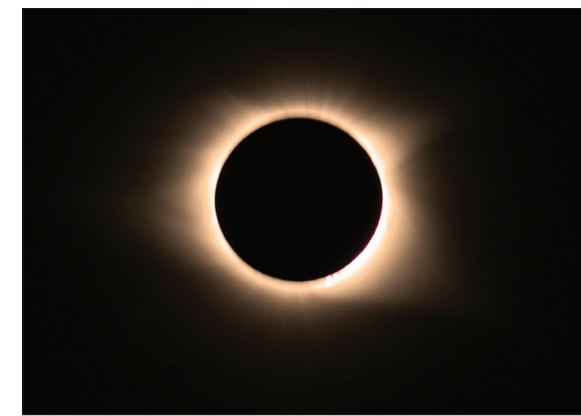
Banks noted continued growth in the nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod sector—surpassing historic leaders like tobacco, which generated \$69.6 million in farm income in 2022.

"Virginia, being an urbanizing state, has a tremendous green industry," he said. "We're also experiencing significant growth in the number of controlled environment agricultural facilities growing greens, herbs and small fruit, with more CEA facilities under construction or planned in Virginia."

Also ranking in the top 10 farm commodities statewide were: other crops and hay, which generated \$185 million; hogs and pigs, \$158 million; fruits, tree nuts and berries, \$144 million; vegetables, melons, potatoes and sweet potatoes, \$135 million; and aquaculture, \$119 million.

Access the full report at nass.usda.gov/Ag-Census.

Moon Photobombs Sun - A Guide to Solar Eclipses and a Viewing Experience



On Monday, April 8, a total solar eclipse will trace a path across 13 states in the United States. Although North Carolina is not in the path of eclipse totality, a partial eclipse can still be seen from this area.

To help the community to learn more and prepare for the best ways to view the eclipse, the Surry Community College Science Division is hosting a presentation, and the SCC Library is

hosting a viewing event.

On Wednesday, March 27, from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., the SCC Science Division will present "Moon Photobombs Sun, A Guide to Solar Eclipses." The presentation will be held in Room A-121 on SCC's Dobson campus. The event, which is free of charge, is open to the public.

On Monday, April 8, 2024, the SCC Library will host a viewing

event from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. near the library on the Dobson campus. Glasses will be provided to attendees for watching the eclipse. This event is also free.

The next total solar eclipse that can be seen from the United States after 2024 will be August 23, 2044.

If you'd like to learn more about the presentation or Science programs at Surry Community College, contact Jeff Jones, SCC Science Division Chair, at jonesj@surry.edu or (336) 386-3391. For questions about the viewing event, contact Maria Saldarriaga Osoria, SCC Director of Library Services, at (336) 386-3501 or osoriam@surry.edu.

In anticipation of the upcoming solar eclipse, Surry Community College will present a program entitled "Moon Photobombs Sun: A Guide to Solar Eclipses" on Wednesday, March 27, in Room A-121 on the Dobson campus. The event is free of charge and is open to the community. An eclipse viewing experience will be held on Monday, April 8, from 1 to 4 p.m. outside the SCC library, also on the Dobson campus.



Local representatives attend annual meeting

Representatives from Patrick County attended the annual Area V Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation District meeting at The Barn at Pine View in Keysville, Virginia.

Guest speakers included representatives from the National Weather Service Office in Blacksburg VA; Department of Conservation and Recreation; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District; Virginia Association Conservation District Employees; National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Kevin Dunn, Area V Chairman.

Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Area V includes Blue Ridge, Halifax, Lake Country, Patrick, Peaks of Otter, Peter Francisco, Piedmont, Pittsylvania, Robert E. Lee, Southside.

Representatives from Patrick County were Tony Collins, Patrick SWCD Conservation Specialist; Sandra Heath, Patrick SWCD District Manager and Stacy Horton, Virginia Department of Conservation and Rec-

reation Conservation District Coordinator for Patrick County.

Soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) were established in the 1930s. Today, 47 districts serve as local resources for residents in nearly all Virginia localities. Districts, which are political subdivisions of the state, manage conservation programs, employ staff and deliver conservation services.

Since the mid-1980s, DCR has relied heavily on districts to help deliver many programs aimed at controlling and preventing nonpoint source (NPS) pollution, often on a hydrologic unit basis. With their volunteer boards and more than 150 full- and part-time technical and administrative employees, districts provide a valuable delivery system for Virginia's statewide nonpoint source pollution prevention programs.

Anyone interested in the agricultural cost-share program may contact the Patrick County Soil and Water Conservation District office at (276) 694-2911 or visit the office that is located at 104 Via Avenue, Stuart.

LEGAL

Patrick County Public Schools - Mowing RFP 2024-MNT-001
The Patrick County School Board is accepting written proposals from interested parties to furnish labor and equipment to mow and trim the major portions of all school grounds for the 2024-2025 school session (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025). This includes spraying for weed control. Bidders are encouraged to attend a pre-proposal meeting Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. at the Maintenance Office located at 117 Via Avenue, Stuart, VA 24171. Proposals will be accepted at the Maintenance Office until 10 a.m. on March 28, 2024. For further information about mowing specifications and expectations, call 276-694-6984.

LEGAL

Patrick County Sheriff's Office

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office will be disposing of the following items. Any person knowing why these items should not be disposed of should contact Lieutenant Nicholas Pendleton with the Patrick County Sheriff's Office prior to April 6, 2024. Patrick County Sheriff's Office, 742 Commerce St, Stuart, VA 24171. 1-276-694-3161

- Marlin 70HC .22 rifle
- S&W 9mm
- Sig Sauer P250 40 cal pistol
- CVA 50 cal muzzle load
- S&W .38 special
- Savage model 949 20 ga.
- Rohm 22 revolver
- Remington 870 Express 12 ga.
- S&W CTG .32
- Iver Johnson Champion 12 ga.
- Marlin model 336 .35 cal
- Davis model P380
- Marlin model 883SS .22 cal
- H&R model 922 .22 cal
- Derringer muzzleloader
- Ruger Mark II .22 cal
- Thompson Center Muzzleloader .54 cal
- Cobra .38 cal over/under
- Taurus .357
- Remington model 700
- CVA Magnum Hunter .50 cal muzzleloader
- Winchester model 70 7mm
- New England .410 ga single shot
- Sig Sauer P230 357 SIG
- Iver Johnson 12 ga
- Remington Nylon 66
- Jennings .22 cal
- Bushmaster 450
- Beretta 9mm
- Taurus model 699 357 mag
- Savage Mark I .22 cal
- Taurus 9mm
- Savage Revelation 350
- F. Lipetta .44 cal muzzleload
- S&W Model 36
- S&W .38 special
- S&W .38
- North American Arms .22 cal
- Glenfield Model 778 12 ga
- Glenfield model 65 .22 cal
- Savage Arms model 6870 20 ga
- Long Tom 12 ga
- Anderson Arms AM15
- Springfield 1911 .45 cal

LEGAL

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. JJ004868-07-00
Commonwealth of Virginia CODE §8.01-316
PATRICK J & DR - JUVENILE
Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court
Commonwealth of Virginia, *in re* NEFF, MICHAEL WILLIAM
The object of this suit is to:
TERMINATE THE RESIDUAL PARENTAL RIGHTS OF JOHN NEFF "RESIDUAL PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES" MEAN ALL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REMAINING WITH THE PARENT AFTER THE TRANSFER OF LEGAL CUSTODY OR GUARDIANSHIP OF THE PERSON, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE RIGHT OF VISITATION, CONSENT TO ADOPTION, THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPPORT.
It is ORDERED that JOHN NEFF appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before 04/04/2024 at 11:15 a.m.
2/29/2024

LEGAL

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. JJ004866-07-00
Commonwealth of Virginia CODE §8.01-316
PATRICK J & DR - JUVENILE
Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court
Commonwealth of Virginia, *in re* NEFF, ANIYA ELLYSE
The object of this suit is to:
TERMINATE THE RESIDUAL PARENTAL RIGHTS OF JOHN NEFF "RESIDUAL PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES" MEAN ALL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REMAINING WITH THE PARENT AFTER THE TRANSFER OF LEGAL CUSTODY OR GUARDIANSHIP OF THE PERSON, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE RIGHT OF VISITATION, CONSENT TO ADOPTION, THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPPORT.
It is ORDERED that JOHN NEFF appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before 04/04/2024 at 11:15 a.m.
2/29/2024

LEGAL

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. JJ004869-07-00
Commonwealth of Virginia CODE §8.01-316
PATRICK J & DR - JUVENILE
Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court
Commonwealth of Virginia, *in re* NEFF, CYAN RAYNE
The object of this suit is to:
TERMINATE THE RESIDUAL PARENTAL RIGHTS OF JOHN NEFF "RESIDUAL PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES" MEAN ALL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REMAINING WITH THE PARENT AFTER THE TRANSFER OF LEGAL CUSTODY OR GUARDIANSHIP OF THE PERSON, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE RIGHT OF VISITATION, CONSENT TO ADOPTION, THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPPORT.
It is ORDERED that JOHN NEFF appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before 04/04/2024 at 11:15 a.m.
2/29/2024

LEGAL

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. JJ004867-07-00
Commonwealth of Virginia CODE §8.01-316
PATRICK J & DR - JUVENILE
Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court
Commonwealth of Virginia, *in re* NEFF, CONNOR AIDEN
The object of this suit is to:
TERMINATE THE RESIDUAL PARENTAL RIGHTS OF JOHN NEFF "RESIDUAL PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES" MEAN ALL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES REMAINING WITH THE PARENT AFTER THE TRANSFER OF LEGAL CUSTODY OR GUARDIANSHIP OF THE PERSON, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE RIGHT OF VISITATION, CONSENT TO ADOPTION, THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPPORT.
It is ORDERED that JOHN NEFF appear at the above-named court and protect his interests on or before 04/04/2024 at 11:15 a.m.
2/29/2024

Meetings

Wednesday, March 20
The Stuart Town Council will meet at 7 p.m. in the Town Office.

Wednesday, March 27
The Patrick County EDA will meet at 7 p.m. in the second floor conference room of the Patrick County Administration Building.

Monday, April 8
The Patrick County Board of Supervisors will meet in the third-floor courtroom of the Patrick County Administration Building at 6 p.m.

Thursday, April 11
The Patrick County School Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. in the school board office.

Events

Wednesday, March 20
The Isaac Sean Rakes Foundation is hosting a spaghetti fundraiser at the Hooker Building at Rotary Field from 5-8 p.m. Plates are \$10 each and include spaghetti, house salad, garlic bread, beverage, and dessert. Take out plates are available. A guest speaker from Piedmont Community Services (PCS) will present a power point presentation on mental health issues and suicide awareness/prevention among youth. Door prizes and raffles. All proceeds will support the Patrick County High School Marching Band.

Thursday, March 21
Patrick & Henry Community College (P&H-CC) will hold a Taking Your Social Media to the Next Level entrepreneurial workshop course from 12-1 p.m. at the Daton IDEA Center. The cost is \$15. Pre-registration is required by going to ph.augusoft.net, or calling (276) 656-5461.

The Patrick County Republican Committee will meet at the Wood Brothers Motorsports Hall of Fame Auditorium starting at 6 p.m. Senate candidate Chuck Smith will attend. Members and guests are welcome.

The Carroll County Genealogy Club will meet at 5 p.m.

Saturday, March 23
Mayo Mountain Church will hold an Easter Egg Hunt, cupcake competition, and scavenger hunt from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

An Experience Youth Rally will be held at the PCHS Auditorium at 6 p.m. Corey Ball is the guest speaker. Entry is free.

Saturday, March 30
The second annual Memorial Show in honor of Kenny Pack, the former assistant football coach and teacher at Patrick County High School (PCHS) and PC Alumni, will be held in the Stuart Rotary Building. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the bell rings at 7 p.m.

The Patrick County Democratic Committee will host Karen Baker, a candidate for U.S. Congress, at its 11 a.m. meeting in the Patrick County Library. Lunch to follow.

Sunday, March 31
Woolwine Methodist Church will hold a Sunrise Service at 7 a.m. with breakfast following the event.

Five Fork Wesleyan Church will hold an Easter Sunrise service at 7 a.m., with breakfast to follow in the fellowship hall. All are welcome.

Tuesday, April 2
Patrick & Henry Community College (P&H-CC) will hold an Excel for Business entrepreneurial workshop from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Dalton IDEA Center. The cost is \$15. Pre-registration is required by going to ph.augusoft.net, or calling (276) 656-5461.

Saturday, April 6
The JEB Stuart Rescue Squad will hold a community breakfast from 7-10 a.m. Plates are \$8, and dine in, carry out, and curb service options are available. Orders can be placed by calling (276) 694-6171.

Thursday, April 11
The Patrick County Senior Citizens Group will hold its April monthly meeting at 11 a.m. in the Hooker Building at Rotary Field in Stuart. Entertainment will be provided by Charles Bowman. Barbecue, slaw, buns, and beverages will be provided. Attendees are requested to bring vegetables and/or desserts to share with the group.

Ongoing

The Patrick County Veterans Memorial Honor Guard meets the first Tuesday of every month at the American Legion Post 105 at 7 p.m. Interested veterans are welcome to attend.

The Coffee Break Café hosts live music on Tuesdays from 9 to 11 a.m. Bring an instrument, or just come and listen.

The Patrick County Library will hold the LEGO Club with Ms. Sam on Mondays from 4:30-5:30 p.m. This program is mainly intended for school age children. Story Time with

Ms. Sam is held at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays with books, songs, finger plays, and more. For more information, call (276) 694-3352.

The Patrick County Alzheimer's Group LLC meets at 7 p.m. the first Monday of every month at the Alzheimer's office at 109 Buena Vista Ave in Stuart. New members or volunteers are welcome. For more information, call (276) 693-6018.

The Patrick County Quilters' Sit-N-Sew is held on Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Quilted Colors. For more information, call 276-694-3020 or email patrickcountyquilters@gmail.com.

The Ararat Ruritan Club will hold Rook games every Monday night from 6:30-8 p.m.

Messianic Bible Study, Fridays from 6-7:30 p.m. at The Honey Pot, 106 N. Main St., Stuart (across from The Coffee Break). Call (276) 694-2356 for more information.

Willis Gap Community Center will hold an Open Jam Acoustic every Friday night with doors opening at 6 p.m. for hotdogs, chips, candies, popcorn, coffee, and assorted sodas. From 7-10 p.m. there will be old time country, bluegrass, and gospel music. A 50/50 drawing will be held at about 8:15 p.m.

The Patrick County Senior Citizens is sponsoring a three day and two nights trip to Elkins, West Virginia, departing Wednesday, September 18 and returning Friday, September 20. The trip will include chartered bus transportation, two nights' accommodations at the Holiday Inn Express in Elkins, tour of the WV Railroad Museum, 4-hour train ride, admission to the Crandell Creek Band bluegrass music show, admission to the Gandy Dancer Dinner Theatre, admission and guided tour of the Green Bank Observatory, five meals (two breakfasts, one lunch, and two dinners), baggage handling, all taxes, and all gratuities. Any adult, regardless of age, is eligible to participate. Trip flyers and more specific information, including cost, can be obtained by calling the Recreation Department at (276) 694-3917 or Judy Lacks, trip coordinator, at (276) 694-4767.

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Next session of College for Older Adults set

Spring is just around the corner and with that comes the next session of College for Older Adults.

The 2024 spring session of College for Older Adults is sponsored by the Landmark Center of Stuart, which serves the community by specializing in assisted living services, and the Estate and Elder Law Center of southside Virginia, where families can find support and assistance in estate planning, long term care, and

rehabilitation. The spring session will run from April 15 – May 24. To RSVP, visit https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc_WHOoop-0CFjjIxQ7-FRrkci1F_jwTwd4ID0e-Ny8Bg-v0w/viewform.

Call me today!
KFain@fourriversva.com (276) 693-3620
21521 Jeb Stuart Hwy PO Box 823 Stuart, VA 24171

NOTICE

All announcements to be included in the Community Calendar must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday the week before publish date. Items are published as space permits. Email to: dhall@theenterprise.net

Weekly SUDOKU
by Linda Thistle

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DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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WHEO
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Classic Hits

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"Small Town Station with a BIG Town Sound"

Top acts selected in talent contest



Elementary winners were Banner Davis, Chet Perdue, Cedar Wade and Gus Wade. (Contributed)



High school winners were Hunter Hubbard, Cole Coffey, Delia Moore and Emma Purdy.



Adult winners were The Trent Girls, Chuck Morel and Linda Bullins.

By Joanne Hill

The 2nd annual Patrick County's Got Talent show was held at Patrick County High School on Sat. March 16, with a large audience attending. Twenty participants were welcomed to the stage along with special performances by Michael Ray Fain with his band, and Tom Watts, with vocals and guitar.

Group, LLC, along with sponsors, Blue Ridge Therapy Connection and Landmark Center are happy to announce the following winners in the three age categories:

Elementary age - 1st place, Banner Davis and Chet Perdue; 2nd place, Cedar Wade and 3rd place, Gus Wade.

High school age - 1st place, Hunter Hubbard; 2nd place, Cole Coffey

and 3rd place, Delia Moore and Emma Purdy.

Adults - 1st place, The Trent Girls; 2nd place, Chuck Morel and 3rd place, Linda Bullins.

Special appreciation is extended to Tony Dixon and the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this show run smoothly. Proceeds will be used to help Alzheimer patients and their caregivers through-

out the county and surrounding areas.

Sally Smith, leader of the local group, invites anyone who is interested in learning more about Alzheimer's disease or in volunteering to contact the Alzheimer's office at (276) 693-6018 or drop by the office on Mon., Wed., or Fri. between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. It is located on Wood Brothers Drive in Stuart.

Winners announced in the 4-H Share the Fun County Contest

The Patrick County 4-H Share the Fun Talent Show was held on Friday, March 8, at Patrick County High School in Stuart, VA. Sheyan Lester won the overall award in the senior division with her vocal performance. Sheyan will move to Virginia 4-H Congress to be held in June at Virginia Tech. Milli Foley won the overall award and the dance category in the junior division with her dance performance. Taylor Spangler won the vocal category award in the junior division with her vocal performance. Both Milli and Taylor will move to the area competition to be held in May at Riverlawn Elementary School in Pulaski County.

In the senior division, Sheyan Lester from Patrick County High School, was chosen to move to Virginia 4-H Congress to be held in June at Virginia Tech. Sheyan will be competing in the vocal category. Sheyan received a blue ribbon for her vocal performance of "If I Was a Cowboy" by Miranda Lambert.

In the junior division, Milli Foley



Talent Show Participants (left to right) Renesmee Moody, Sheyan Lester, Taylor Spangler, Savannah Carroll, Isabel Wilson, Milli Foley, Mahala Martin, Alaina McBride, Hailey Lester.

from Stuart Elementary School, was chosen to move to the area competition to be held on Saturday May 4th, at Riverlawn Elementary School in Pulaski County. Milli will be competing in the dance category. Milli received a blue ribbon for her dance performance to "ABC" by Jackson 5.

In the junior division, Taylor Spangler from Stuart Elementary School, was chosen to move to the area competition to be held on Saturday May 4th, at Riverlawn Elementary School in Pulaski County. Taylor will be competing in the vocal category. Taylor received a blue ribbon for her vocal performance to "My Jesus" by Anne Wilson.

In the junior division, Renesmee Moody from Blue Ridge Elementary School, received a blue ribbon for her dance performance to "Rise Up" by Andra Day. Competing in the vocal category, Savannah Carroll from Hardin Reynolds Memorial School, received a red ribbon for their dance performance to "Cotton Eye Joe" by Rednex. Competing in the dance category, Isabel Wilson from Meadows of Dan Elementary, blue ribbon for her dance performance to "Shake it Up" by Selena Gomez.

We also appreciate our judges Cristen Hamm and Elian Pendleton. Mistress of Ceremonies included Gabby Reynolds. This show would not be possible without our Elementary School Talent Show managers, sound engineers, judges, and emcees.

We are truly thankful for the support of all of the faculty, staff, and parents at each elementary school that make this show possible. Thank you to Patrick County High School for hosting the 2024 Patrick County 4-H Share the Fun County Contest.



Talent Show Winners. (Contributed)

School, received a red ribbon for their dance performance to "Cotton Eye Joe" by Rednex. Competing in the dance category, Isabel Wilson from Meadows of Dan Elementary, blue ribbon for her dance performance to "Shake it Up" by Selena Gomez.

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Local veterans honored as part of national wreath program

By Taylor Boyd

A woman with ties to the Nettle Ridge area hopes to spread Wreaths Across America and its mission of honoring veterans to Patrick County.

Dee Wood Kivett said Wreaths Across America is a nationwide, nonprofit organization where people donate money for the purchase of wreaths to honor veterans.

Wreaths are generally placed the third week-end of December each year before Christmas.

Around Martin Luther King Day, Kivett said volunteers will collect the wreaths "because they're all fresh wreaths, they're not artificial. They're all-natural greenery," she said.

Kivett said in some cities the placing ceremony is a huge event with thousands of wreaths placed.

More than 2.7 million sponsored veteran's wreaths were placed on headstones in 2022 as part of the program.

Kivett said she and her family, father Delano Wood and son Kyle Kivett, cover the Nettle Ridge Church cemetery, the Concord Family cemetery and the adjoining Tatum family cemetery.

While the Concord Methodist Church has stopped meeting, Kivett said they "still want to honor those who are laid to rest there."

Kivett said people don't become members of Wreaths Across America.

"You don't join so to speak. You decide to donate to them and support their cause," she said. "We'd love to see more people in Patrick County adopt similar cemeteries and do similar projects at their own churches and cemeteries around the community."

Kivett said she learned about the program when she and her girl scout troop were invited to serve at a ceremony in Greenville, SC, where she lives.

"So, for a few years I basically was leading girl scouts to go and volunteer at this ceremony. We have a big one down here where it's hundreds and hundreds of graves that are honored at one cemetery alone," she said.

One year, Kivett said she was going to be in Patrick County visiting family for Christmas when the ceremony would usually take place.

"I thought, 'well you know what? While I'm up there why don't we just do it up there.' Because we always enjoyed it so much, and so we just decided to start one in Nettle Ridge," she said.

Kivett said this year will mark six years of her doing it here, with two of them at Nettle Ridge and Concord where she organized and led the ceremony.

She compares her work to an 'adopt a graveyard' project.

"If you like the project, but you don't really know where to contribute, you can just contribute to the Wreaths Across America project and a wreath will be donated. You can say \$100 and that would buy so many wreaths," she said.

Kivett said those wishing to donate wreaths to a specific location must be a participating location in the program.

"For example, if you decided you wanted to donate to the big cemetery in Patrick Springs, well there's nobody organizing an event there, so you can't donate to a place that doesn't have an organizer," she said.

If people wanted to donate to graves in that cemetery, Kivett said then somebody will have to volunteer to be the one to receive the wreaths.

"Because a tractor trailer truck will drop off big, huge boxes of wreaths somewhere in somebody's possession, they're not just going to drop them at the cemetery where there's nobody. They have to deliver them to a place where a person can receive them and take care of them and get them to the cemetery," she said.

Kivett added wreaths can be delivered directly to a ceremony if there's a place to store them.

For more information, visit www.wreathscrossamerica.org or [Facebook.com/WreathsAcrossAmerica-OfficialPage](https://www.facebook.com/WreathsAcrossAmerica-OfficialPage).

Initial unemployment claims trend up

The number of initial unemployment insurance claims edged up in the latest filing week to 2,229 and was at typical pre-pandemic volumes, according to Virginia Works (the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement).

For the filing week ending March 9, seasonally unadjusted initial claims for unemployment insurance in Virginia totaled 2,229, which was an increase of 55 claimants from the previous week. Continued weeks claimed totaled 15,629, which was a decrease of 198 claimants from the previous week but an increase of 32 percent from the 11,837 continued claims from the comparable week last year. An industry was reported for ninety-three percent of continued claims. Of those, over half (57 percent) of continued claims were from administrative and support and waste management (2,145), professional, scientific, and technical services (2,096), construction (1,445), manufacturing (1,306), and health care and social assistance (1,272). Eligibility for benefits is determined on a weekly basis, and so not all weekly claims filed result in a benefit payment. This is because the initial

claims numbers represent claim applications; claims are then reviewed for eligibility and legitimacy.

In the week ending March 9, the U.S. advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 209,000, a decrease of 1,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised down by 7,000 from 217,000 to 210,000. The advance number of actual U.S. initial claims under state programs, unadjusted, totaled 199,952 in the week ending March 9, a decrease of 14,472 (or -6.7 percent) from the previous week. There were 210,665 initial claims in the comparable week in 2023.

Looking at preliminary data, most U.S. states reported increases on a seasonally unadjusted basis. California's preliminary weekly change (+968) was the largest increase. Oregon's preliminary weekly change (+943) was the second largest increase. Indiana's preliminary weekly change (+430) was the third largest increase. Iowa's preliminary weekly change (+373) was the fourth largest increase. Virginia and Alabama were tied with the eleventh largest decrease (-97).

Arrests Reported

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office reported the following:

*China Marie Welch, 30, of Riner, was charged March 8 with five counts of petty larceny and one count credit card larceny. Senior Deputy A. Kinney was the arresting officer.

*Tracy Leon Jessup, 50, of Ararat, was charged March 9 with three counts petty larceny and one count each possession of burglarious tools and Sch. I/II possess with intent to manufacture/sell/distribute. Senior Deputy A. Kinney was the arresting officer.

*Eric Alexander Stevens, 40, of Ridgeway, was charged March 10 with probation violation. Henry County made the arrest for Patrick County.

*Ronald Scott Richards, Jr., 32, of Max Meadows, was charged March 10 with probation violation. Wythe County made the arrest for Patrick County.

*Keondre Demone Holmes, 31, of Critz, was charged March 11 with fail to appear. Sgt. J.G. Pickrel was the arresting officer.

*James Nelson Thompson, 24, of Patrick County Jail, was charged March 13 with abuse/neglect child. Inv. T.E. Jessup was the arresting officer.

*Elijah Christian Anthony Lizana, 23, of Bassett, was charged March 14 with one count each strangle another and assault. Senior Deputy A. Kinney was the arresting officer.

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Virginia Memory Project aims to get better Alzheimer's data, provide resources

By Parker Barnes
Capital News Service

Virginia will become one of the few state-backed registries that collects data on patients with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative disorders, in order to improve brain health and caregiving.

Annie Rhodes was a doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she now teaches, when she first noticed a gap in such collected data — not just in the state, but around the country.

"We just don't know how many people have dementia," Rhodes said. "We have some ideas but we just don't know."

Rhodes knew a registry would be possible with funding and support, which ultimately led to the Virginia Memory Project, or VMP. An estimated 190,000 people aged 65 and older in Virginia have Alzheimer's, according to the Alzheimer's Association, but not all are getting the help they need, nor are their caregivers.

"We can't help, we can't address, we can't prevent unless we know that," said Ashley Staton, VMP social worker and dementia education specialist for VCU.

House Bill 1455 creates state support for the project. The measure is likely to pass Gov. Glenn Youngkin's desk after it received unanimous support in both chambers. It has an effective date of January next year.

The legislative support will help advance the conversation around neurodegenerative disorders, according to Staton.

The bill reaffirms the work that is already being done and might spark progress nationwide, according to its patron Del. Betsy Carr, D-Richmond.

"I think that this kind of thing will be an opportunity to provide a model for other states," she

said.

Project funding did not make the final budget passed by the General Assembly, but the team hopes to eventually receive state funds.

"Having that support gives us a drive to evaluate where we really need to put resources so that we can go back and ask for a budget next year," Staton said.

Rhodes and Staton work with VCU faculty and personnel from the state Department of Health. They also work with a minister, a geriatrician, data scientists and a gerontology team to collect data and connect patients to services.

The VMP registry is built on data from medical service providers, caregivers and voluntary self-enrollment. Undiagnosed people with memory concerns can take the questionnaire, as well as anyone who wants to enroll. That helps with baseline data, Rhodes said.

The data is confidential, and a name is optional. Rhodes hopes better data can lead to "ramping up the number of services that we can provide."

"It wasn't just about us taking something from the community, it was about returning," Rhodes said.

Minority communities are disproportionately affected by these disorders, due in part to social factors, such as low income and environmental justice issues, not genetic factors, according to Staton.

"I could go on and on about the disparities that lead to that," Staton said. "But they're racial, and they're social, and they're economic, and it doesn't help when you add age to the equation."

A registry can help with evaluation, planning and intervention, according to Daniel Bluestein, the VMP geriatrician advisor. But, dementia registries are scarce because the diagnosis is clinical. That can make the diagnosis harder, and more subjective than a disease such as cancer, which is

determined via biopsy, he said.

"You're going to have people who don't identify as patients, or they have memory concerns and they don't want to bring them up," Bluestein said. "There is a lot of discomfort with doing that on the part of both patients and providers."

This discomfort is often placed on caregivers, who are not always best suited to have those emotional conversations, according to William Donaldson, a Virginia-based educator and caregiver advocate. He wrote the book "Estimated Time of Departure."

"Let's not put that burden on them who already have a very emotional heavy burden to carry," Donaldson said.

Donaldson became the executor of his parent's estate when they were healthy, and said he quickly learned it is a "very common problem" that people avoid discussion around end-of-life care.

"It just struck me as very, very odd that here's something that we're all going to experience and yet we don't talk about it effectively," he said.

There are an estimated 351,000 unpaid caregivers in Virginia, which includes spouses and relatives caring for someone with Alzheimer's and related diseases, according to VMP data. Many don't have the resources or experience to help with memory health.

Rhodes worked as a caregiver prior to her academic career.

"I saw first-hand the lack of support and knowledge and infrastructure for people living with dementia and for their caregivers, both formal and informal," Rhodes said. "It absolutely has galvanized me to do something about it."

Capital News Service is a program of Virginia Commonwealth University's Robertson School of Media and Culture. Students in the program provide state government coverage for a variety of media outlets in Virginia.

N.C. Man Admits to Traveling to Virginia to Have Sex with Minor

A North Carolina man, who lied about his age to a 14-year-old girl he met on Instagram before traveling to Virginia to have sex with her, recently pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court.

Rayvon Birden, 26, of Raleigh, North Carolina, pled guilty yesterday to one count of traveling in interstate commerce for the purpose of engaging in sexually illicit conduct. As part of his plea agreement, Birden and the government agreed to a sentencing range between 78 and 120 months in prison and that he will be required to register as a convicted sex offender upon his release.

According to court documents, Birden contacted the 14-year-old victim through Instagram direct messaging and represented himself as a 16-year-old named "Nolan."

Birden and the victim exchanged phone numbers and began communicating via text messages and Facetime regularly. Over the course of their con-

versations, Birden masturbated in front of the victim and, on at least one occasion, asked for nude photographs of her, which the victim sent via text messaging.

Birden then drove from his home in North Carolina to meet the victim at a hotel near her Virginia home where they had sexual intercourse on multiple occasions, at least one of which Birden filmed.

United States Attorney Christopher R. Kavanaugh and Special Agent in Charge Derek W. Gordon of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Washington, D.C. made the announcement.

Homeland Security Investigations - Washington, D.C., in conjunction with the Albemarle County Police Department and the Southern Virginia Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, is investigating the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jordan E. McKay is prosecuting the case.

USDA Finalizes Voluntary 'Product of USA' Label Claim

At the recent National Farmers Union Annual Convention, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the finalization of a rule to align the voluntary "Product of USA" label claim with consumer understanding of what the claim means.

"This final rule will ensure that when consumers see 'Product of USA' they can trust the authenticity of that label and know that every step involved, from birth to processing, was done here in America," Vilsack said.

The Final Rule
USDA's final "Product of USA" rule allows the voluntary "Product of USA" or "Made in the USA" label claim to be used on meat, poultry and egg products only when they are derived from animals born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the United States. The rule will prohibit misleading U.S. origin labeling in the market, and help ensure that the information that consumers receive about where their food comes from is truthful.

USDA's final "Product of USA" rule is supported by petitions, thousands of comments from stakeholders, and data from a nationwide consumer survey.

Under the final rule, the "Product of USA" or "Made in the USA" label claim will continue to be voluntary.

It will also remain eligible for generic label approval, meaning it would not need to be pre-approved by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) before it can be used on regulated product, but would require the establishment to maintain documentation on file to support the claim. The final rule also allows the use of other voluntary U.S. origin claims on meat, poultry and egg products sold in the marketplace. These claims will need to include a description on the package of the preparation and processing steps that occurred in the United States upon which the claim is made.

USDA has also published an updated labeling guidance on the use of voluntary U.S.-origin label claims to provide examples of claims and the types of documentation that establishments may maintain to support use of the claims. The guidance will be open for public comment for 60 days after publishing in the Federal Register. Public comments can be submitted at www.regulations.gov.

Establishments voluntarily using a claim subject to the final rule will need to comply with the new regulatory requirements by January 1, and are encouraged to do so as soon as practicable after the publication of this final rule.

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New Va. legislation may spread consumer awareness about invasive plants

By Shelby Warren
Capital News Service

Legislation to educate consumers on invasive plant species passed in the General Assembly, but not without debate over where signage would be placed.

Invasive plant species are not native to the region and can negatively impact ecosystems. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has identified 90 invasive plant species, by rank of most to least invasive. Species on the list include kudzu, English ivy, golden bamboo and periwinkle.

Sen. Saddam Salim, D-Fairfax, introduced Senate Bill 306 and Del. Holly Seibold, D-Fairfax, introduced House Bill 47. Lawmakers at the end of the legislative session smoothed out the differences between the bills and passed a final proposal.

Lawmakers were divided on whether the signage should be at each invasive plant display or at an entrance. The Senate amended both bills to place signage at entrances, but the House rejected the amendment. The original House bill also wanted language at each display that stated: plant with caution, could cause environmental harm and ask about alternatives.

The final bill passed will require any place that sells an invasive plant species to display a sign nearby that warns consumers and encourages them to ask about alternatives. There is a penalty of no more than \$500 for retailers who fail to post the signs and a stop sale order until the signage is posted.

"We can't stop invasive plants all 100% but making

it aware to individuals who are purchasing is a step forward," Salim said.

The commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services will determine the format, size and signage content by October. The signage will have a QR code that links to the Department of Conservation and Recreation's invasive species list that is updated every four years.

The sign is expected to be black and yellow for optimal visibility, according to Salim.

Invasive species have cost Virginia as much as \$1 billion annually, according to the Virginia Invasive Species website. This total exceeds \$120 billion nationally.

Current state code prohibits state agencies from planting, selling or propagating any listed invasive plant, unless necessary for "scientific or educational purposes or bona fide agricultural purposes."

Pat Calvert, director of clean water and land conservation at Virginia Conservation Network, supports labeling invasive plants. He sees the legislation as an opportunity to educate consumers.

This also creates a responsibility for retailers to be transparent in what they are selling, Calvert said.

Calvert has dealt with pesky English ivy on his property, which, like other invasive plants, spreads quickly through seeding and roots.

"It's just really, really tough to get rid of," Calvert said.

The plants can damage an ecosystem or agriculture.

The Southeast Asian tree of heaven is a primary food source for the spotted lanternfly, which has expanded its territory, according to Calvert. The flies damage crops.

The management of these plants is problematic and costly for individuals, localities, parks and farmers, Calvert said.

Friends of the James River Park System in early March hosted Invasive Species Awareness Week. The program educated people on invasive plants through activities like plant removal, nature walks and more. The organization has hosted this awareness event since 2015.

The James River Park System has over 50 invasive plant species that threaten trees, water and soil quality, and also native bugs, birds and flowers, the organization stated.

Lawmakers recently approved a budget that distributes several million dollars across departments to help meet initiatives outlined by the Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan, and which includes the hiring of new employees.

The governor is currently reviewing the budget and legislation. The General Assembly will reconvene on April 17 to consider any of his proposed changes.

Capital News Service is a program of Virginia Commonwealth University's Robertson School of Media and Culture. Students in the program provide state government coverage for a variety of media outlets in Virginia.

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RSVP BY 3/27
Patrick County Tourism Summit

APRIL 8TH AT FAIRY STONE STATE PARK
FAYERDALE HALL
967 Fairystone Lake Dr, Stuart, VA 24171
Registration 9:30am
Lunch Provided

PATRICK COUNTY chamber of commerce
PATRICK COUNTY Virginia

The Office of Tourism will host our Annual Tourism Summit on April 8th at Fayerdale Hall, located at Fairy Stone State Park. We invited everyone in the Tourism Field to come out and learn about Tourism and its impact on our community.

Registration begins at 9:30 a.m., and the Summit will run from 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided! Please RSVP on the Chamber of Commerce website by March 27th to reserve your seat.

To reserve your seat. <http://www.patrickchamber.com/news.cfm>

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