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

## Squad returns to volunteer roots, discusses finances, other issues

**By Taylor Boyd**  
The Jeb Stuart Volunteer Rescue Squad is taking names – for volunteers in a quest to return to its volunteer roots. It is also dealing with an ill-timed and perhaps ill-spirited prank, and discussing its finances with the community.

Derek Wagner, captain of the squad that planned to shutter earlier this year after being turned down by the county for financial help, said the squad's financial information has been public for many years. He noted that most nonprofit agencies are required to file an annual 990 report with the government, and the local squad is no exception. Additionally, the squad is audited annually, and provides a copy to the county, which also is required to obtain funding from the county.

Because it discussed closing, the squad was not included in the county's current budget for the new fiscal year that began on July 1.

Wagner said that as is customary for most other businesses and

organizations, salaries were the squad's top expense. In 2023, that included \$227,577.97 spent for payroll, and \$82,898.24 was for payroll taxes, with a combined total of \$310,476.21.

As the squad's chief that year, Wagner was paid a \$50,000 base salary for working 50 hours a week. He earned another \$22,602.13 in overtime pay.

"That was working approximately 66 hours a week. That's on average. Some weeks, it was 80, 90, or 100 hours a week while I got straight salary. But if you break it up, on average, I was working 15 hours overtime each week," he said.

Other staff also were paid. While The Enterprise is not using the names of those employees, the titles and amounts paid are as follows:

An EMT Basic #1 position received \$55,776.89 for the year, for an average of 56.6 hours work a week, Wagner said.

A part-time driver #1 who started in October received \$6,735.75 for

(See Squad Returns p.2)



## Celebration delivers a stunning show

A dazzling display of fireworks lit up the skies in and around Stuart on Thursday at DeHart Park. The spectacular, nearly 45 minute Patrick County Fourth of July Fireworks Display capped Independence Day celebrations mesmerized youngsters. Sever-

al onlookers "oohed, aahed," and clapped as the fireworks exploded with kabooms and whistling sounds, rivaling thunderstorms that rolled through the county earlier in the day. (Photos by Jamie Hall)

(See Celebration p.2)



Patrick County Food Bank volunteers work to pack food boxes to be passed out.

## Food Bank sees increase in use

**By Taylor Boyd**  
Due to the rising cost of groceries, the Patrick County Community Food Bank has seen an increase in client and expects that trend to continue.

Executive Director Rhonda Pruitt said the food bank came out of 2023 in a good position.

"We are comfortable in purchasing what is needed, however it does get difficult as costs rise. We get some stuff from USDA (United States Department of Agriculture), some of the stuff is free, but the majority of the stuff we're ending up buying," she said.

Pruitt said the food bank primarily purchases its groceries from Food

Country, Walmart, and the USDA. She estimates the organization passes out 350-400 food boxes each month, or at least 4,200 boxes a year.

"We typically do more in November and December," she added.

Stuart Hampton, a volunteer, said the food bank customer cycle is cyclical as it "goes up and down."

"It was high during the COVID months, and then it came back down. It's going back up again, I can only assume because of the economy and the devaluation of the dollar and things associated with that. We're up about 15 percent per month over last year," he said.

(See Food Bank p.3)

## Some candidates prepare for November election

**By Taylor Boyd**  
The Dan River seat on the Patrick County Board of Supervisors and three positions on the Stuart Town Council, including the mayor post, are all up for grabs during November's election.

The Dan River seat became vacant after Brandon Simmons resigned from the board earlier this year. Jane Fulk, who formerly represented the district, was appointed in June to serve as the interim until the November election. Whoever wins the election will serve out the remaining term of one year.

"No one has filed at this time," for the Dan River post, Registrar Susan Taylor said.

The deadline for application packets for the Dan River special election is Friday, August 16 at 5 p.m.

The two town council seats up for grabs belong to incumbent members Dave Hoback and Erica Wade, Taylor said.

Both current council members have submitted their applications for reelection. No one else filed to be on the ballot, Taylor said, adding that because the deadline to file has passed, anyone interested can still run as a write-in candidate.

Taylor said three people filed to run for Stuart's mayor – council members Terry Dalton, Jeffrey Houchins, and Rebecca Adcock.

Town Manager Bryce Simmons said the mayor position is its own separate position that is independent from the general council members.

"The only time that the mayor votes is when there is a tie between the five councilors, if there is a tie," he said.

Regardless of which candidate wins the mayoral election, Simmons said the town will have a vacant seat after this election as the winning candidate will vacate their current seat to take the mayor's seat.

"I assume that we will appoint someone in the interim to fill the vacancy seat, but that would be up to council whether they want to just appoint or have a special election," he said.

Simmons said the vice-mayor is the candidate who gets the most council members votes within that election year. The position is not determined by the November election.

"At least that's what the policy has been," he said.

## Childhood friends reunite on business venture

**By Taylor Boyd**  
A Little Bit of Everything, a store that sells what the name suggests, recently opened in a storefront on U.S. 58, beside Circle K in the former Papa Larry's building.

Started by Chris DeBruhl and Darren Diggs, the store is set to have a grand opening on Saturday, July 13 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. with free hotdogs and drinks, and door prizes to "make it a fun day for everybody," DeBruhl said.

Diggs and DeBruhl, both Patrick County natives and childhood friends, displayed their wares at Cook's Flea Market in Winston-Salem, N.C., for years. DeBruhl said he and Diggs felt they had something to offer Patrick County, especially with the economy.

"We decided we wanted to come home and sell to some of the people in Patrick County and let them in on some of the good deals we got because anything in here is less expensive than any place that you can buy it" locally. "To help them maybe make it through a little easier," he said.

DeBruhl said Diggs has been in the business for about 30 years, while he's been in it for about four.

Diggs has "got a lot of contacts and everything," he said.



A Little Bit of Everything will hold its grand opening Saturday, July 13.

The store currently sells belts, shirts, hats, medicine, tools, shoes, wallets, batteries, baby clothes and equipment, and other items. DeBruhl added that everything the store sells is brand new.

"All of our stuff is new stuff, no secondhand, especially on the clothes. All the clothes are brand new. Now some of the tools" are second hand "because we've traded, but I'd say maybe less than 10 percent of the tools are used, but they're in very good shape," he said.

The business is also already considering expanding to sell lawnmowers, golf carts, and used cars.

"We're talking to a Toyota place

in Bassett to sell a few used cars. We're going to have, as the name implies, A Little Bit of Everything. Whatever we can acquire and pass the savings onto the people of Patrick County," he said.

As they buy their merchandise in big quantities, whatever is for sale will be in the store for a while. Then, the merchandise will change as they buy different products.

For example, DeBruhl said the store currently has 30,000 belts in stock waiting to be sold.

"It's whatever we come across. We've got vests and ties that come prom season or whatever, a vest and tie will cost them like \$10. I



Chris DeBruhl (pictured) and Darren Diggs decided to open the store after working in Winston-Salem, N.C. for several years.

mean you can't buy a vest and tie for \$10" anywhere else," he said.

DeBruhl said he and Diggs purchased the ties and vests after a tuxedo store went out of business and they bought all of the unsold items.

"We bought like 10,000, so we got them for pennies on the dollar.

(See Childhood Friends p. 3)

# Tourism Talks

Hello Patrick,  
A few weeks ago, I wrote about the heat and how I preferred cooler weather. Due to the ongoing drought, many people have been hoping for rain, which reminded me of a song by the Temptations called "I Wish It Would Rain." Much to my relief, the rain arrived on the 4th of July, and I wasn't upset since we greatly needed it. It seems like everyone was able to enjoy some form of celebration, and the fireworks were fantastic. A big thank you to all those involved in making the fireworks display possible.

We had a small gathering at the Historical Museum, where we participated in the ringing of the bells. John Reynolds and his team had a scaled-down version of the Liberty Bell, and we were able to join in on the celebration. If you get a chance, I'd recommend visiting to see it - the bell may be small, but it produces a mighty sound.

July will be another great month to explore our county. You can visit the orchards and find homegrown

goodies for sale at Levering Orchards, Windy Hill Orchard, Martin's Blueberry Hill, and Wades Orchard. In addition, Dawson's and Ayers Orchards, located in Cana, VA, are also worth a visit. If you're looking to beat the heat, you can head to the public pool at Dehart Park in Stuart or stroll along the Blue Ridge Parkway under a canopy of trees providing shade and a pleasant mountain breeze. I have previously mentioned our beautiful State Park, Fairy Stone State Park, which offers a large lake for all water activities, swimming, and boating.

On July 20, competitive kayaking will be at the 41st Red Bank River Run. Kibler Valley is another hidden gem, offering beauty and tranquility as the Dan River winds through it. If you haven't been, I would encourage you to come out and support the Ararat Ruritans as they host the event. There are many more places and events that are occurring, so please check out our events calendar on our website. Also, if you have information about unique places we missed or upcoming events, please share it



with us. We love to keep you - and us - informed. Lastly, no matter what you do, please ensure safety, be welcoming, show some love, and express gratitude. We are blessed in Patrick, and if we respect it, the tourists who

visit our area will, too. Remember, "Come get lost and find yourself here." Talk to you soon, love you!  
James Houchins: Director of Economic Development and Tourism  
jhouchins@co.patrick.va.us

## Marriage Licenses

The following marriage licenses were issued in the Patrick County Circuit Court Clerk's Office in June:

- Daniel Alan Ullring- Jessica Keith Slate.
- Mitchell Thomas Rosseau- Gabriele Nicole Williams.
- Erin Renee Hughes - Brandon Lee Hylton.
- Tiffany Nicole Wagoner- Terry Allen Grubb.
- Martin Edward Morse - Julianna

- Grace Overby.
- Hudson Grant Hatfield- Kaelin Faith Deneui.
- Hunter James Kenyon- Allyson Deanna Lawson.
- Daniel Mark Smith - Courtney Ryan Sharpe.
- Randall David Bowman- Melissa Sue Stump.
- Rashawn Michael Williams- Briana Renee Carter.

# Squad Returns

(cont. from page 1)

about three months of work, while the Paramedic #1 position received \$24,591.25 for about six months of work.

An EMT Basic #2, which was a part-time post, started on February 5, and received \$12,514. An Advanced EMT #1 received \$44,355.06 working full-time, an average of 48.1 hours a week.

"A lot of weeks were 60 hours weeks, but there were a couple of weeks" that person could not work due to personal reasons, he said.

Wagner said a part-time driver #2 started in the role on September 16. That person was paid \$5,346.25. EMT Basic #3 received a pay of \$25,092 working an average of 45.46 hours a week, while EMT Basic #4 received \$27,736 working an average of 37.2 hours a week.

"We had \$21,306.25 that was paid to five volunteers (as stipends). So, that's on a per call basis that they're getting a set amount per call they run," he said.

Also in 2023, Wagner said the squad spent \$34,478.57 on fuel, and paid \$37,668.67 for insurance.

"Truck maintenance, that's going to be oil changes, tires, breakdowns, hauling, towing, \$19,689.81. Utilities, that's going to be power, gas, stuff like that" was "\$13,308.07, medical supplies - \$9,006.26," he said.

The squad's miscellaneous costs - which include accounting fees, billing fees, operating supplies, and other costs - totaled \$26,878.82, with "most of it is going to be the billing agency," he said.

As for the squad's immediate fu-

ture, "we have volunteer staffing, so we're just covering the calls as we can," Wagner said, adding that the organization now is acting solely as a volunteer rescue squad. No one in the squad currently receives a paycheck for running calls.

Currently, six volunteers respond to calls as much as they can between their full-time jobs and daily lives.

"We all work full-time jobs, some of us work two jobs. There's several days that we don't have any coverage at all, and Station 8 (the county's paid squad that was created to back-up other squads) covers all the calls," Wagner said.

With few volunteers, the squad's response to calls has dramatically dropped, Wagner said, and estimates the squad is covering two to five percent of all its calls.

"On average we're getting dispatched to 100 to 120 calls" each month, he said.

However, squad treasurer Joanne Spangler noted that even the two percent call coverage is likely still equivalent to most other squads, which may have fewer calls because the Jeb Stuart squad covers a larger area with a larger population.

"Like Blue Ridge (Volunteer Rescue Squad) or Vesta (Volunteer Rescue Squad). If we run 16 to 17 calls, we're running five to 10 percent, but" if those squads respond to the same number of calls, "they're running 100 percent," she said.

For example, Wagner said one month the JEB squad covered four or five calls, but was toned out to 120 calls.

"So, you do that math 120 divided

by four or five that gives you a percentage, right? So CCDF gets toned like 16 to 17 calls a month and they cover four or five calls. So, we cover the same number of calls, but their percentages are higher due to the mathematical equation," Wagner said.

To help increase the number of calls it can cover, Wagner said more volunteers are needed.

Wagner said the squad can help interested volunteers take the Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) to learn how to drive emergency vehicles or take an Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) training course.

"Helpers - we're looking for just people to help us keep the building clean. We're not limiting anything, so even if you don't want to run calls, there's still volunteer opportunities here," he said.

Wagner said the squad rents the community space side of the building out every weekend.

"Just somebody to help keep" stuff clean. "Because what it is, the same people that runs the calls are trying to keep up on the building and everything. Keep the chairs and tables clean, keep the floors clean, keep the bathrooms clean," he said.

Wagner also addressed concerns about the squad's building after a "For Sale" sign from a local real estate company was placed on the squad's property approximately 11:44 p.m. on Saturday, June 22.

In a video posted to the squad's Facebook page on June 25, an ambulance that appears to belong to the county's paid service can be

seen driving down the road. A few seconds later, a car turned around in the squad's parking lot. The ambulance then passes the building again as it drives back in the opposite direction.

A woman wearing a hoodie is then seen running onto the squad's property with the 'For Sale' sign in hand.

Wagner said the sign generated a number of calls - from county officials to residents. Most asked about the fate of the building.

"As of now, the building nor any of Jeb Stuart's assets is for sale. We don't want to sell, we're not going to sell. We hope to stay alive and go back to our volunteer roots, but we don't know what's going to happen" in the future, he said.

"This was a senseless prank, played on the squad and the community," the Facebook post said. "We have additional camera footage, but it is not being released at this time."

He urged anyone who may have additional information or tips to call the organization at (276) 694-6171 or email him at Derek.wagner@jebstuartrescue.org.

The video can be viewed at Facebook.com/JebStuartRescueSquad. "We will keep your tip anonymous," the Facebook post stated.

The squad's next meeting is July 15 at 7 p.m. at the building. Anyone interested in volunteering is invited to attend. In the meantime, anyone interested in volunteering can call (276) 694-6171, or email Wagner at Derek.Wagner@jebstuartrescue.org.

# Celebration

(cont. from page 1)



(Photos by Jamie Hall)



# Pets of the Week

Kittens, kittens and more kittens. The shelter is over run with some really cute kittens. Just a \$10 adoption fee and they will have a rabies vaccine and be spayed/neutered before they go home with you.

Visit the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter's (PCPAS) Facebook page to view available pets or call (276) 694-6259 for more information. Adoption fees are \$10 and include spay/neuter and a rabies vaccination.



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WWW.THEENTERPRISE.NET

Norris Memorial Services

Visit our website for pricing:  
www.norrismemorialservices.com



1500 Kings Mtn Rd.  
Martinsville, VA,  
276-638-2778

# Food Bank

(cont. from page 1)



Patrick County Food Bank Volunteers work to pack food boxes to be passed out.



Volunteers unload pallets of food for those in need.



Volunteers work in a conveyor belt system to pack the food boxes and prepare them for distribution.



To get a food box, Pruitt said those who need one can show up during a distribution day and give their names and information to a volunteer.

"That signs them up," Hampton said.

In the event of a proxy, Pruitt said a person needs to call the food bank and give their information. The proxy would then need to bring a note from the person they're picking up for, and a volunteer would send a proxy note back for a signature.

Pruitt said the income requirements to get a food box are set through the USDA, and the guidelines are determined by the number of people in a household.

"They're similar to those that are required by the state for food stamps. If you have food stamps, you're automatically eligible. Otherwise, you tell your income, and we see if you meet that guideline," she said.

For example, Pruitt said a one-person household can make \$2,248 a month. "Then it just increases as it goes. Most people are going to qualify," she said.

Hampton said the food boxes are meant to be a supplement for a person's diet. "It is not intended to feed them and be their only source of nutrition," he said.

Boxes generally contain 15 to 20 cans of canned goods like apple sauce, ravioli, vegetables, peanut butter, fruit cocktails, and spaghetti sauce and 7 to 8 packages of dry goods like rice, lentils, spaghetti, macaroni and cheese, and nuts.

"That's just in the actual box. Then we will have a separate box that contains meat and refrigerated items. We occasionally get butter and eggs, we'll get fruit juices that we can pass out. So, there's not really a set box that we pass out per se," Hampton said.

Recently, Hampton said a man with the USDA Healthy Food Banks Initiative came to the food bank and

remarked the contents were good.

At Thanksgiving and Christmas, Pruitt said the food bank tries to ensure there's enough food so a person can have a holiday meal. At Thanksgiving, she said the organization typically buys turkeys to give away during distribution. Additionally, those boxes will typically have stuffing, cranberry sauce, pie filling, boxes of dried potatoes, and other holiday foods.

"And then they'll get the same thing at Christmas as well," Hampton said.

In addition to its Stuart, Meadows of Dan, and Ararat locations, Pruitt said someone picks up and delivers boxes to Horizons.

Boxes are also picked up and delivered to Cedar Square Apartment and Cotton Mill Apartment residents.

"We are adding those in because those are some of the people that can't necessarily get out and come down here and pick up for themselves. We have had someone who is picking up and delivering to the residents in those two developments," she said.

Apartment residents who want their food boxes delivered can be put on lists.

Pruitt said the food bank will get their information and make the people sign a proxy giving another person permission to pick up their boxes, but she added, "we have to have that signed proxy on file stating that they have permission to do that."

Pruitt said there were some discussions about expanding into the Woolwine area, but nothing final. She noted there's already a food bank of sorts in the area.

"We don't want to step on anybody's toes. If they need us, they reach out and if we need them, we reach out," she said. "There are people from Woolwine that will drive over here and get some things."

Pruitt said the food bank's backpack program serves every school

except for the elementary schools in Meadow of Dan and Woolwine.

"That's because they opted out. They already had somebody doing theirs," she said.

The backpack program seeks to provide enough food for a child to be able to eat over the weekend. One hundred and twenty backpacks are given out each weekend to children. Pruitt said each backpack includes two breakfast items, two lunch items, two dinner items along with two snacks and drinks.

"It's all pop-top stuff and stuff that kids can open. Things that kids can open on their own because we realize that there are parents who do not have time to stop and make sure that everybody has something. So, we're making sure that the children have it," she said.

Parents interested in having their children join the backpack program may contact the school their child attends.

"If an individual family is in need, we have had School Resource Officers (SRO) call and say, 'I've got a family up here that is really in need and they're too proud to ask. Can you send us something?' And they'll send a cop over here and pick up a couple of boxes and take them to the school," she said.

Pruitt said the food bank exists to be a community resource.

"If they need something they can reach out and leave us a message and we'll get back to them," she said.

Hampton said it's the same for the food boxes.

"If someone calls us in the middle of the month and they need food, we're going to make it happen," he said.

Pruitt noted the food bank is not a government subsidy and does not receive money from the government or the county. Instead, the organization relies on donations from local businesses, churches, and people.

"We are not a government-funded entity, so we are not getting any government money from anywhere," she said.

Hampton said the food bank is thankful for the support given by county residents. "Not just monetarily, but physically and just being there helping us help other people of the county," he said.

"We want to live in a community where we come together with love and care to look out for each other. This is our homeplace," Pruitt said.

Hampton estimates there are about 35-40 volunteers who pack food boxes, work distribution days, unload trucks of food from the USDA, and do other necessary tasks.

"We have kids that come. We have a little guy from Hardin Reynolds (Memorial School) with his grandpa and he'll jump right on in there and work his little tail off. He's great," Pruitt said.

She said the food bank likes for children to come and hand out things they've made to those picking up food boxes. Students also come there to do community service.

"It never hurts for the people who come through to know that we do support our children and we allow them to come over here and work and do whatever they want to do to help out," she said.

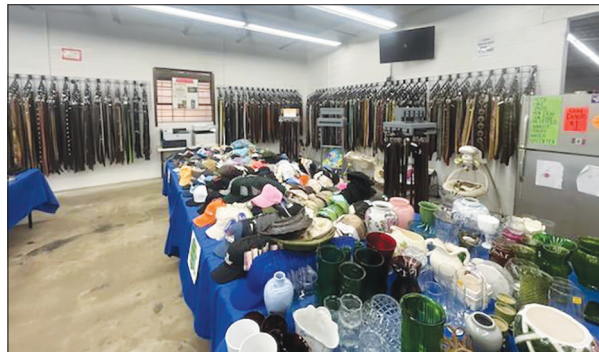
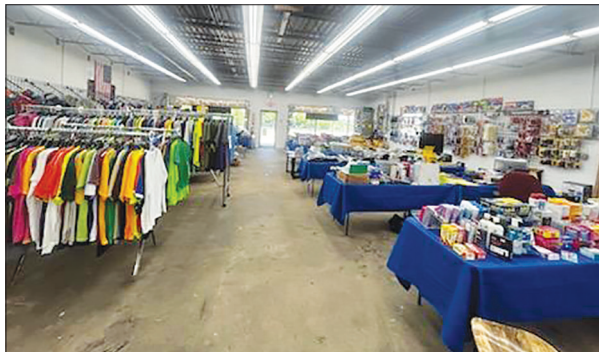
Those interested in donating monetarily can mail a check to P.O. Box 1304, Stuart, VA, 24171. Those wishing to donate food should contact the food bank and schedule a time to drop the donation off or have the food bank come and pick it up.

People interested in volunteering should contact Pruitt at (276) 694-6300 or (276) 806-4152, or via email at PatrickCountyFoodBank@gmail.com.

For more information, go to Facebook.com/PatrickCoFoodBank.

# Childhood Friends

(cont. from page 1)



The store sells a variety of items including clothing, belts, hats, glassware, and other items.

We're going to pass those (savings) onto people. We have to make a little bit to keep in business of course, that's always true with a small business," he said, adding that he enjoys seeing people's faces "light up" when they see a deal.

The store consists of three rooms, but only the front room will house merchandise for sale.

"In the fall, we're going to start having auctions here" in the back room, "once or twice a month. It's

going to be wholesalers coming in and auctioning wholesale stuff to individuals," he said.

DeBruhl said anything wholesalers want to auction can be put on the bidding block as long as it's new. The third side room will house inventory and serve as a space for wholesalers to back their trucks in for the auctions.

The back room "will be empty except for a few chairs. Hopefully, a lot of people will come out to

the auctions. I remember when I was a kid, they had a few auctions around here. They were fun, I thought at the time, and I think people will enjoy it, just to come out and just for something to do," he said.

DeBruhl said a Facebook page and a website for the business will be created in the future.

A Little Bit of Everything will be open Tuesdays-Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.



A Little Bit of Everything is located on U.S. 58 besides Circle K.

# Are the Olympic Games Fair?

On July 26, the 2024 Summer Olympic Games are set to begin in Paris.

These competitions provide countries from all over the world the opportunity to showcase their best athletes.

The United States holds an illustrious record in the Games. Most recently in Tokyo, the United States placed first in medals won (113) as well as gold medals (39).

In Tokyo, most aspiring Olympic athletes played by the rules and worked their tails off to perfect their craft.

Unfortunately, this can't be said of every athlete.

Earlier this year, the New York Times broke news of twenty-three Chinese swimmers who tested positive for banned performance-enhancing substances before the Tokyo Games.

Despite this revelation, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) cleared the swimmers to compete in the Tokyo Games and didn't inform the rest of the athletes!

Five of those swimmers had a medal finish.

Subsequently, eleven of those twenty-three were selected to participate in this year's Paris Games too.

Doping in sports has prompted bipartisan Congressional attention before. In 2017, the Oversight Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee launched a hearing to discuss ways to strengthen the international anti-doping system.

Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, the most decorated athlete in Olympic history with a record twenty-eight medals, was a witness at that 2017 hearing.

During that hearing, Phelps emphasized: "If we allow our confidence in fair play to erode, we will undermine the power of sport and the goals and dreams of future generations."

Some changes were made at WADA.

Now as Chairman of the Subcommittee, I asked Phelps to return and he agreed to testify again because the earlier changes were ineffective. I held a hearing on June 25th to discuss WADA and things Congress can do to help ensure a level playing field.

Accompanying Phelps as a witness to this hearing was U.S. swimmer Allison Schmitt. Although not as world-famous as Phelps, she won ten Olympic medals (4 gold) in her career. Wow!

The Chinese doping scandal is a deeply personal issue for Schmitt. She missed out on another Olympic gold medal at the Tokyo Games. In the 800-meter freestyle relay, her team placed 2nd to the Chinese. Some of those Chinese competitors are a part of the list of twenty-three who failed their drug test.

Also in attendance at the hearing was U.S. Olympic swimmer, Allison Wagner. Although she was not a witness for the hearing, she finished 2nd in the 1996 400-meter individual medley. The gold med-



**Morgan Griffith**

Representative

alist from that race, an Irish swimmer, was suspected to be a user of performance-enhancing drugs.

During the hearing, it became clear that doping issues partly stem from inconsistency in testing athletes.

I advocated a simple solution. Investigations should be performed in the same manner and that every violator receives the same punishment, regardless of nationality.

Phelps concurred with the idea and cited one year where he was tested over one 150 times, while other Olympic delegations received only thirty or forty tests.

Schmitt went into graphic detail of her tests, an uncomfortable and awkward reality (see the June 25th hearing recording, 1:02:18).

But she acknowledged that this is what she signed up for. And others should be held to the same standard to keep the sport clean.

The witnesses railed against WADA for not showing up to support athletes.

Travis Tygart, head of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), testified WADA - which consists of a former member of China's Olympic Committee - should not allow individuals from various national Olympic Committees to serve on WADA.

It would have been nice to make recommendations in-person to WADA. However, WADA decided not to accept the Subcommittee's invitation to testify!

Earlier in June, WADA also declined to testify to the German Bundestag (parliament).

This demonstrates to me that WADA is not interested in addressing anti-doping concerns. Moreover, it calls into question WADA's commitment to provide a level playing field for all athletes.

If there is no responsible authority to enforce equal and fair measures, how can Olympians trust the outcomes of competitions?

How can athletes put their faith into a system that is subjected to abuse by cheaters?

As the biggest contributor to WADA (nearly \$3.7 million this year), the United States should re-evaluate the funds we send them.

NBC, which has a \$7.5 billion contract with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and other sponsors could also exercise influence to promote clean competition.

Phelps and Schmitt have represented their country admirably. I am determined to see reform as future generations aspire to compete at the Olympic Games.

Call my offices with questions, concerns, or comments: Abingdon, (276) 525-1405; Christiansburg, (540) 381-5671, or via email at <https://morgangriffith.house.gov/>.

## My articles to The Enterprise

(Newsmax, Fox, Bible, Daily Signal, Todd Starnes, The Federalist)

I had an individual ask me why I end my articles published in The Enterprise ---Pray for our country. As a Christian, the Bible commands us to pray for the entire leadership structure of our society, regardless of our personal political affiliations. By doing so, we acknowledge God's ultimate authority over those in positions of leadership.

Our nation has departed from God's ways, disobeyed His Word, and ignored His warnings to turn away from our sin. The result is a nation where everyone does what is right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25). Our country today is in a mess. America needs leaders who will stand and say we need to call upon the name of Almighty God for forgiveness. Unless that happens, our nation will experience God's judgment, not His blessings. I do not see us getting out of this mess that we are in unless Almighty God Himself intervenes on our behalf.

More than ever our country needs repentance, healing, and God's grace to overcome the hatred, immorality, and nihilism that is plaguing our land and its people. Pray for our country with love and cherish that God is sovereign over all powers and principalities of this world. Prayer should never be used for judgement against others. Remember, all vengeance belongs to the Lord (Romans 12:19).

One area that is abhorrent to me is the support of the LGBTQ perversion of our children by this administration. During the 2024 Seattle Gay Pride Parade, fully naked men riding bicycles exposed themselves

in front of children. Drag queens were grabbing small children and inviting them to dance with them in the streets. Not a single adult intervened. Police did not arrest any of the men who exposed themselves in front of the children. The Boy Scouts marched holding rainbow-colored flags side by side with the American flag.

In the DC 2024 Pride Parade, the LGBTQ community was represented by, 5 U.S. military branches, fire department and EMS, police carrying Pride flags, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence who mocks religion, people wearing fetish and bondage gear, and drag queens dressed demonically. Religious groups were represented, including Dignity Washington, who is D.C.'s faith community for LGBTQ Catholics, and United Methodist Churches of the National Capital Area. Many parade-goers and participants wore T-shirts with sayings such as "Wake up sluts, it's time to sin," "Live, laugh, lesbian," and "Not today, Jesus." There was also topless women and androgynous individuals boldly walking in the parade. The police could not be bothered to write tickets for public indecency. Finally, there was a booth displaying children's books in the kid's area, and one book written by a 12-year-old drag queen.

Christians should see the LGBTQ people as people who need God as much as anyone, and have compassion and love for the homosexual person, but hate the sin that keeps the person in bondage.

Pray for our country.  
William Salser,  
Stuart

## Dear Madam Editor:

Every year, a few dedicated folks take time away from their families and holiday activities to help in the hard work of setting up, shooting, and taking down the annual Patrick County Fourth of July Fireworks Display at DeHart Park in Stuart. The County of Patrick, the County's Tourism Advisory Council, and the Town of Stuart enabled us to shoot what we promised would be a show appropriately commemorating our Nation's Birthday. I hope that you think we delivered.

Those persons who made it happen include D.J. Lawson of Ararat Volunteer Fire Department; Ronald Terry and Doug Scott of Meadows of Dan Volunteer Fire Department; Chris Hooker, Toby Hooker, Ross Adams, Joey Erichetti, Clint

Weidhaas, Austin Erichetti, Will Vernon, Chris Owens, and Lane Ross of Patrick Springs Volunteer Fire Department; Emergency Management Coordinator Scottie Cassell, II; Carl Smith of Station 8; Buddy Dollarhite, Terri Mills, Alex Pegram, Ivan Byers, Terry Tillery, Jonathan Wilson, John West, and Wesley Hudson of Stuart Fire Department; and Jerry Woods, Greg Meade, Randy West, Assistant Fireworks Coordinator Steve Allen, and Karen Corbett. Their safety-conscious hard work is much appreciated. Stuart Town Manager Bryce Simmons also rendered valuable assistance.

Chris Corbett,  
Patrick County Fireworks Coordinator

# Home Country

## Slim Randles

When Windy Wilson joined us for coffee down at the Mule Barn coffee shop, we smiled. Windy doesn't show up for too many of the b.s. coordinations and we think it's because he doesn't like the competition.

"You boys seen that sun this mornin'?"

"Sure did, Windy," said Doc. "Looked about like the one we had yesterday."

"See, that's just my point. You heard on the radio 'bout that climatic change stuff, right?"

"Right."

"Well, you remember 'way back to July last year? I shore do. Hotter'n a chile pepper on a campfire, it was. So what we got now? Hey, it's still a-boilin' hot out there. Oughta be somethin' we could do 'bout it."

"Don't get ya, Windy," said Steve.

"Like what would you do?"

"Maybe sue 'em," Windy said. "Who?"

"Why, those lyin' snakes that oportuned us to 'spect cooler weather. What's the sense in havin' another hot summer if we are supposed to climatohoosically change? Ain't right."

Loretta refilled the coffees. We all took a grateful sip.

"You might have a hard time finding someone who is responsible for the weather, Windy."

"I know it, Doc. But hey, I'll preposterate to you guys right now, I'm ready for that change to cooler days."

"You just have to wait a little longer, Windy," Steve said. "Til about September, I think."

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Disclaimer: Viewpoints and opinions expressed in letters selected for publication are the opinions of the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Enterprise.

## Patrick Pioneers

*Defenders of Bataan (Part Five)*  
By Beverly Belcher Woody

I was not planning on another installment of the Defenders of the Bataan this week, but I received three significant messages about the men that I felt I needed to share.

The first phone call was from Mrs. Carol DeHart Harrell of Meadows of Dan. Carol DeHart Harrell grew up in Floyd and is the daughter of the late Clarence A. DeHart and Vera Sumpter DeHart; she married Mahlon Harrell of Meadows of Dan.

Mrs. Harrell called me to share that her mother's brother, Sgt. Melvin Harmon Sumpter was hospitalized at the Newton D. Baker Hospital in Martinsburg, West Virginia. This was the same hospital that Ralph Jefferson Turner, Sr. spent six months recovering from the serious burns he received during the war.

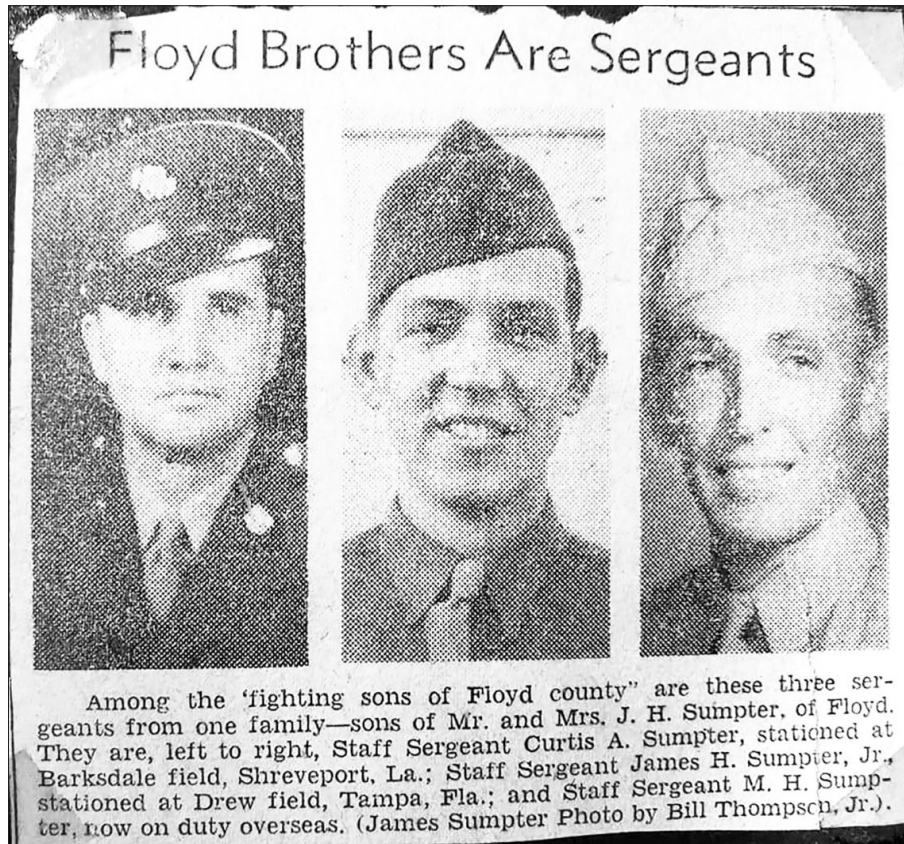
The doctors were not expecting Sgt. Sumpter to survive his injuries from the war, so his family was taking turns driving from Floyd to West Virginia to visit him. Mrs. Harrell, who was 10 years old at the time, begged her mother to come along to visit her dying uncle.

Mrs. Harrell's mother had attended college with a relative of Ralph J. Turner's and had heard that Turner was in the same hospital as her brother, so plans were made to visit

Ralph Turner too. Mrs. Harrell said she could remember it like it was yesterday. She said that Ralph Turner was wrapped in bandages from head to toe, but he was so happy and excited to see folks from the area where he grew up. Mrs. Harrell stated that after she read the Patrick Pioneers article about Turner, all those memories came flooding back, like it was yesterday. Mrs. Harrell's uncle, Sgt. Melvin Harmon Sumpter passed away on the 30th of November 1945; he was 33 years old. Sumpter's body was brought back to Floyd where he was buried in Jacksonville Cemetery.

The second phone call I received was from Viola Trent Skinnell who grew up in the Critz area. Mrs. Skinnell is the daughter of the late Cyclone Thomas Trent and Era Eliza Cummings Trent. Cyclone was the brother to James Walter Trent who endured so much suffering in the Japanese concentration camps.

Mrs. Skinnell said that when Trent returned home, after enduring the beatings, torture, and medical experiments, he was legally blind and unable to work. Mrs. Skinnell said that Trent also shared the pepper story (see Part Four) with her and that he had hidden the pepper in his boot, but the Japanese had detected the scent of the crushed pepper. Trent told his niece, Mrs. Skinnell, that he mostly



Sumpter sons, from the Floyd Press.

survived by eating sweet potato vines. Sandy Rodgers emailed me and said that his parents, William and Margaret Dalton Rodgers were friends with James Trent. After reading the 'Pioneer' story last week, Rodgers stated that it confirmed the stories of torture and experiments that he had heard Trent sharing with his parents.

As we celebrate our country's 248th

birthday this week, may we never forget men like Camden Bryant, Stanley Aaron, James Trent, Ralph Turner, Hayne Dominick, Jr., and Melvin Sumpter. These brave men endured and sacrificed so much so that we could keep the independence and freedoms that we cherish. 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

### Will IRA Withdrawals Affect My Medicare Premiums?

**Dear Rusty:** I am a member of AMAC and learn so much from the Ask Rusty column. I hope you can give me some information about a question that has come up in my family. My husband is retired and has reached full retirement age. He is considering withdrawing money from an IRA to pay off our mortgage. We are wondering what, if any, penalties may be incurred on Social Security, Medicare, and income tax. Thank you for your help in this matter. Signed: *Concerned Taxpayer*

**Dear Concerned:** Thank you for contacting the AMAC Foundation Social Security Advisory Service. Regarding your question on the impact of withdrawing IRA funds, there is no impact to your husband's gross Social Security benefit. The amount withdrawn, of course, is considered ordinary income for federal income tax purposes, and will need to be included as such on your federal in-

come tax return and will therefore affect your federal income tax liability when you file the return.

Depending on the amount withdrawn, there could be an impact to the Medicare premium due to the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) provision. Assuming you file jointly, you will pay a higher Medicare Part B premium if your modified adjusted gross income is above certain thresholds (i.e., more than \$103,000 for an individual and \$206,000 for a married couple). Please note that Medicare's procedures will not note this income change for two years, so if you make the withdrawal in 2024 it will not trigger the increases until your 2026 Medicare premiums. A change to your Medicare premium might also result in a change to your net Social Security payment at that time (since Medicare is automatically deducted from your Social Security payment).

Also depending on the amount withdrawn, you may have to pay an additional amount on top of your Medicare Part D premium. The Part D adjustment amount is calculated based on a percentage of the Part D national base beneficiary premium,

not on a percentage of the plan premium.

The Social Security Administration mails letters to beneficiaries who currently pay a Part B Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) and, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), are in a Part D plan. The letter explains the additional Part D amount, and how exactly Social Security will collect it. You can contact SSA at 1-800-772-1213 or your local SSA agency if you have any further questions about your Part D IRMAA premium.

*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.*

## A Massive Study on People's Steps All Over the World

In a recently published article in Nature magazine, researchers used smart phone data to track the activity of 717,527 people over the course of 68 million days in 111 countries. Some of their findings made obvious sense, but other discoveries were subtle, useful, and unexpected.

First, some general stats from the study:

Overall, the subjects in the study averaged 4,961 steps every day.

The country lowest in steps was Indonesia at 3,513 steps per day.

The highest was China, at 6,880 steps.

The United States was 4,774, slightly below average.

### 1. Activity Inequality

Now, steps did correlate with national obesity rates, but not as strongly as the variation in walking, i.e. activity inequality. The countries that had more variation in the number of steps their people took daily had a higher national rate of obesity.

In this respect, America was the fourth worst country in regard to activity inequality, which could help to explain our obesity epidemic. This insinuates that, even if two countries had the same overall average number of daily steps, the country with more activity inequality would have more obesity due to more obesity in the less ac-

tive portion of their population.

Or, to put it simply: variation in walking nationwide = higher overall obesity rates

### 2. Activity Inequality + Gender Gap

This led to the next interesting finding, which showed that 43% of activity inequality was explained by a gender gap; women were significantly less active than men. While there are some countries and cultures where women walk less, obesity rates among women rose in countries with low overall activity and high activity inequality.

### 3. Activity Inequality + Income Inequality

The researchers then did two different statistical modeling experiments. In one, they tried to model what would happen if they closed the income inequality gap by providing more income to the lower income group. The model predicted that there would be a 400% greater reduction in obesity in targeted therapy and policy, versus population-wide approaches. This has a significant potential impact on how and where we choose to use our limited resources.

Here's what we can glean from the study:

Walking works. Walking more leads to less obesity. The National Weight Loss Registry (which I'm a part of) looks at people who have lost a significant amount of weight and have kept it off for at least two years. What they've found is that,

by far, the most common exercise was plain old walking.

We should focus on closing the gender gap and encouraging women to walk more, and consider what the root cause for women walking less might be. The possible explanations are endless, but some that come to mind are:

Foot pain from uncomfortable, heeled shoes.

Women tend to be in charge of childcare, which often entails sitting and watching the younger children, while fathers go out and play with the older kids. This could add to the gender gap.

Survey data is very clear in that women do not feel safe running alone as a high percentage have been at least verbally accosted if not physically.

It's not the healthy folk that need hospitals, just as it's not the runners that need to hear this message. We need to encourage our less active friends to get a bit more active! We don't need to guilt them into running a marathon with us, but maybe inviting them to a walk with us after dinner, or take the stairs with us at the mall, or park a few spots further from the building on purpose.

It's time to step it up!

(Submitted by Betty Dean. Written by Harvey Hahn, MD. Used by permission from www.lifeandhealth.org Courtesy of LifeSpring - Resources for Hope and Healing Stuart, VA)

## Laurel Fork health center selected for food scarcity innovation program

Edwin J. Viera  
Virginia News Connection

A Virginia community health center is part of a program addressing food scarcity.

The National Association of Community Health Centers' 2024 Innovation Incubator creates ways to expand healthy food access. Tri-Area Community Health Center's Laurel Fork location will have funding and guidance from experts to help them design and test community-based solutions.

Merrill Warschhoff Press, senior vice president of partnership, development and innovation for the National Association of Community Health Centers, said the centers are uniquely suited to address local food issues.

"Health centers are highly effective and innovated with integrated models of care," Press explained. "They reach far beyond the walls of the traditional exam room, not only to prevent illness and treat it but to really address the social drivers that may cause



poor health."

Food insecurity has grown since pandemic-era programs ended in 2023. Emergency allotments provided SNAP recipients with an added \$95 per month for 470,000 families statewide. However, some people are above or below SNAP's qualifying threshold.

Other issues stem from food prices. The Consumer

Price Index shows food prices grew between 2022 and 2023 but in recent months, prices have been declining.

A primary goal of the Innovation Incubator is to discover best practices for providing care for millions of people and share them with health centers nationwide. Press noted the methods being worked out can help varying populations.

"There are many health centers who have large populations of patients who come from other countries and are used to certain foods, and have different preferences," Press observed. "Being able to work with them in their own language with the foods that they like and trust is really valuable to improving access to food that'll make a difference in their lives."

Food pantries have been key to reducing food insecurity wherever possible. Virginia food banks saw a 5% to 10% increase in demand at the end of 2022, which is problematic since food banks nationwide are seeing donations decline and reduced commodities from the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

# Alex Bowman earns NASCAR Cup Playoff berth with strategic Chicago win

By Reid Spencer  
NASCAR Wire Service

On a wet-and-dry day on the streets of Chicago, crew chief Blake Harris made the right call, and driver Alex Bowman promised to wet his whistle after ending an 80-race drought.

"The last time we won, we didn't really get to celebrate—we're going to drink so much damn bourbon tonight," said Bowman, who clinched a spot in the NASCAR Cup Series Playoffs with his victory in Sunday's Grant Park 165 at the Chicago Street Race.

"It's going to be a bad deal. I'm probably going to wake up naked on the bathroom floor again. That's just part of this deal sometimes."

Driving the No. 48 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet, Bowman claimed the eighth victory of his career with a pass of sports car ace Joey Hand on Lap 51—moments before Josh Berry plowed into the tire barrier in Turn 2 of the 2.2-mile, 12-turn course to cause the fifth and final caution.

At that point, the race was on the clock, thanks to a heavy rain that had caused a lengthy stoppage after Lap 25. Facing a deadline of 8:20 p.m., with two laps to follow that point in the race, Bowman held off runner-up Tyler Reddick to win an event shortened from 75 to 58 laps because of the delay.

Harris got his first win as a crew chief by keeping Bowman out on older wet tires after the final caution. Neither Christopher Bell, who arguably had the best car in the race, nor Reddick could catch Bowman over the closing laps.

Bell's charge to the front was blunted by a five-car melee, and Reddick nicked the wall and lost momentum on the final lap.

"We were catching Alex by a large margin there, and, I don't know, that puzzles me," said Reddick, who finished second for the second straight week. "I clearly just screwed up. Trying to stay in the dry groove, and I had more than enough of dry groove... I cut the wheel a little too hard."

Bowman crossed the finish line with a 3.447-second edge over Reddick to score his first win since March 6, 2022 at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

"Man, I broke my back (in a sprint car accident), had a brain injury, and we've kind of sucked ever since," Bowman said. "I didn't... you start to second-guess if you're ever going to get a chance to win a race again."

Enhancing Bowman's opportunity on Sunday was the ill fortune that befell the top two contenders.

Halfway through the restart lap for Stage 2 (Lap 25), the complexion of the race changed dramatically. Chase Briscoe, out of control in his No. 14 Ford, slid toward the tire barrier in Turn 6 and clipped the rear of the Chevrolet of defending winner Shane van Gisbergen.

The impact propelled van Gisbergen's Camaro nose-first into the outside wall at the exit from the corner, and the car came to rest, unable to continue. Van Gisbergen's exit suddenly raised the stakes for the drivers who trailed him to the finish line in Stage 1.

After leaving the infield care center, van Gis-



Alex Bowman, driver of the #48 Ally Chevrolet, celebrates after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Grant Park 165 at Chicago Street Course on July 07, 2024 in Chicago, Illinois. (Photo by James Gilbert/Getty Images)

bergen watched a replay of the incident.

"Just sort of turned in, looked pretty good and then just got smashed by someone (Briscoe)," the New Zealander said. "Just gutting. The car was really good. We were in the lead for a lot of that race and, you know, felt good taking off in the rain. That sucks—an unfortunate mistake by him, but I'm sure he didn't mean it."

"But, yeah, when he just clipped me, there was nothing I could do. Of course I'm disappointed. We had a pretty amazing Camaro there... I felt like I was driving well within myself. It's a shame to be out so early and a shame we couldn't have a proper crack at it at the end."

By the time Briscoe delivered the coup de grace to the No. 16 Chevy, Gibbs had wrested the lead from Zane Smith, who stayed out on older wet tires, and Bell, who was first off pit road during the stage break.

The field didn't complete Lap 25 before NASCAR called the second caution of the race for heavy rain. After a red-flag period of 1 hour, 43 minutes, one second, the race resumed and went green on Lap 31, with Bell retaking the lead from Gibbs before completion of that circuit.

On Lap 34, pole winner Kyle Larson, in pursuit of Gibbs, hydroplaned into the Turn 6 tire barrier, damaging his No. 5 Chevrolet beyond repair.

In a race where late strategic calls scrambled the field, Gibbs led a race-high 17 laps and came home third, followed by Hand and Michael McDowell. Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Todd Gilliland, William Byron, Kyle Busch and Ryan Blaney completed the top 10.

Bell led 14 circuits, but he, Gibbs and Reddick pitted for slick tires on Lap 43 and couldn't get back to the front.

For the second straight year, rain shortened the NASCAR Cup race at the Chicago Street Race, but the wet weather did little to diminish the festival atmosphere that captivated the Windy City throughout the weekend.

"I've raced about every street course in the country and a lot around the world, and you won't find a backdrop like this," said Hand, who led seven laps on wet tires before Bowman led the final eight.

NASCAR Cup Series Race - Grant Park 165  
Chicago Street Race  
Chicago, Illinois  
Sunday, July 7, 2024

1. (8) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 58.
2. (4) Tyler Reddick, Toyota, 58.
3. (2) Ty Gibbs, Toyota, 58.
4. (38) Joey Hand, Ford, 58.
5. (3) Michael McDowell, Ford, 58.
6. (33) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Chevrolet, 58.
7. (26) Todd Gilliland, Ford, 58.
8. (27) William Byron, Chevrolet, 58.
9. (19) Kyle Busch, Chevrolet, 58.
10. (17) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 58.
11. (9) Daniel Suarez, Chevrolet, 58.
12. (35) Daniel Hemric, Chevrolet, 58.
13. (6) Bubba Wallace, Toyota, 58.
14. (28) Noah Gragson, Ford, 58.
15. (21) Austin Cindric, Ford, 58.
16. (23) Justin Haley, Ford, 58.
17. (30) Zane Smith #, Chevrolet, 58.
18. (10) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 58.
19. (15) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 58.
20. (16) Chris Buescher, Ford, 58.
21. (18) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 58.
22. (14) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, 58.
23. (32) Joey Logano, Ford, 58.
24. (13) Carson Hocevar #, Chevrolet, 58.
25. (31) Harrison Burton, Ford, 58.
26. (40) Kaz Grala #, Ford, 58.
27. (20) Corey LaJoie, Chevrolet, 58.
28. (39) Josh Bilicki(i), Ford, 58.
29. (25) Erik Jones, Toyota, 58.
30. (11) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 58.
31. (34) Austin Hill(i), Chevrolet, 58.
32. (22) Chase Briscoe, Ford, 58.
33. (24) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota, 58.
34. (29) Ryan Preece, Ford, 58.
35. (12) John Hunter Nemechek, Toyota, 57.
36. (36) Josh Berry #, Ford, 57.
37. (7) Christopher Bell, Toyota, Accident, 55.
38. (37) AJ Allmendinger(i), Chevrolet, Accident, 48.
39. (1) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, Accident, 33.
40. (5) Shane Van Gisbergen(i), Chevrolet, Accident, 24.

Average Speed of Race Winner: 54.921 mph.  
Time of Race: 2 Hrs, 19 Mins, 24 Secs. Margin of Victory: 2.863 Seconds.

Caution Flags: 5 for 19 laps.

Lead Changes: 9 among 6 drivers.

Lap Leaders: K. Larson 0; T. Gibbs 1-11; S. Van Gisbergen(i) 12-14; C. Bell 15; S. Van Gisbergen(i) 16-21; Z. Smith # 22-24; T. Gibbs 25-30; C. Bell 31-43; \*. Hand 44-50; A. Bowman 51-58.

Leaders Summary (Driver, Times Lead, Laps Led): Ty Gibbs 2 times for 17 laps; Christopher Bell 2 times for 14 laps; Shane Van Gisbergen(i) 2 times for 9 laps; Alex Bowman 1 time for 8 laps; \* Joey Hand 1 time for 7 laps; Zane Smith # 1 time for 3 laps.

Stage #1 Top Ten: 16,20,54,14,5,48,23,38,45,99  
Stage #2 Top Ten: 60,48,6,77,19,10,31,47,21,11

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# New Dentist Joins Martinsville Smiles

Blake D. Brockbank, DDS, of Richmond has joined Martinsville Smiles family dental practice, becoming the fourth full-time dentist in the office.

A native of Salt Lake City, Utah, Brockbank is a graduate of Brigham Young University and the VCU School of Dentistry. Following in the footsteps of his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Dr. Brockbank is a fourth-generation dentist and has been surrounded by dentistry his whole life. He and his wife fell in love with Virginia and are thrilled to be a part of the Martinsville Smiles family.

Dr. Brockbank's top priority is to provide excellent care for his patients, and he strives for every patient to leave his chair with a smile. He loves caring for patients of all ages, backgrounds, and situations. Staying up to date with the latest technologies and techniques in dentistry is one of his professional priorities. Offering a variety of treatment options, Dr. Brockbank works with his patients to determine the best treatment that meets their individual needs. Fluent in Spanish, he is happy to conduct visits in Spanish per patient request.

"Dr. Brockbank adheres to the Martinsville Smiles high standards of dental practice" said Dr. Mark Crabtree, managing partner of Martinsville Smiles. "He is well trained and has solid experience while being committed to personalized care for each patient."

Martinsville Smiles is welcoming new patients. For an appointment with Dr. Brockbank, call (276) 632-9266 or visit [www.martinsvillesmiles.com](http://www.martinsvillesmiles.com). Appointments are being made now.

In his free time, Dr. Brockbank spends a lot of time outside playing sports, disc golfing, or hiking. In inclement weather, he can be found

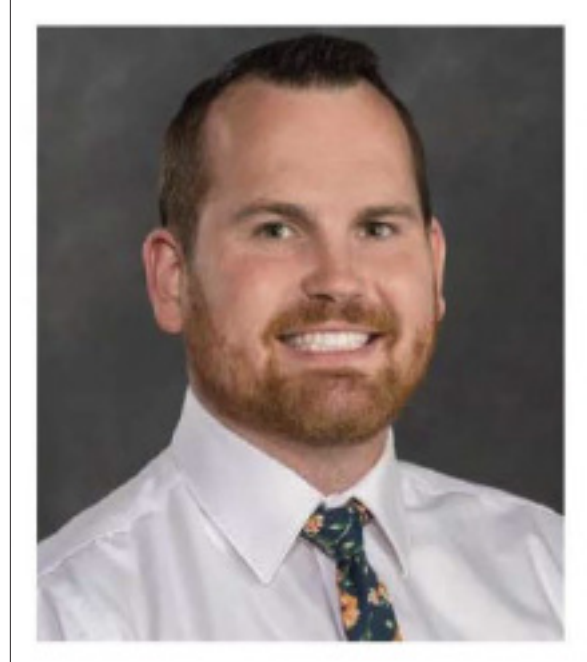
watching college sports or playing board games. He and his wife, Kaylee, have been married for five years and welcomed a baby girl in May.

Martinsville Smiles has developed a personalized preventive program of regular examinations, cleanings and education to help patients keep their teeth healthy. "Healthy teeth should last a lifetime," said Dr. Crabtree. "Martinsville Smiles provides comprehensive dental care for the entire family."

Martinsville Smiles was founded by Dr. Fred B. Caffey in 1960 and continues to be locally owned. Dr. Crabtree acquired the practice in 1985 and Dr. Charles Jenkins joined Martinsville Smiles in 2010 and Dr. David Stafford came onboard in 2016. Dr. Crabtree is a graduate of Fieldale-Collierville High School, Wake Forest University and the VCU School of Dentistry. He is a former Mayor of Martinsville and past-president of the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Jenkins is a graduate of Laurel Park High School, Virginia Commonwealth University and the VCU School of Dentistry. He has been a Supervisory Dentist for the Dental Hygiene Program at Danville Community College and has participated in multiple Mission of Mercy (MOM) Projects, which aid patients in underserved areas throughout the state of VA. He has served on the Advisory Board for the National College of VA and on the Campaign Team for the United Way of Martinsville and Henry County. As an active member of Granbery Methodist Church, he has served in many leadership activities.

Dr. David Stafford has participated in several Mission of Mercy projects in Virginia and has volunteered for the American Cancer Society's Relay



Blake D. Brockbank, DDS, of Richmond has joined Martinsville Smiles family dental practice, becoming the fourth full-time dentist in the office.

for Life. On the state level Dr. Stafford has served on the Ethics and Caring Dentist Committee and currently serves on the Virginia Dental Association Board of Directors and is Chairman for the New Dentists Committee.

Drs. Crabtree, Jenkins and Stafford have been awarded Fellowship in the International College of Dentists, the American College of Dentists and have been recognized for their leadership as Fellows in the Virginia Dental Association.

Martinsville Smiles has been frequently voted the best dental practice in southwest Virginia.

# Exhibit now open in Danbury



The Stokes County Arts Council announced an exhibit of original art by Kitty Ray Brown and Patty Young will be on exhibit in the Apple Gallery. A reception is scheduled for Saturday, July 13 from 3:30-5 p.m. in the Apple Gallery of the Stokes County Arts Council 500 Main Street, Danbury, N.C.

Brown shared that her French Impressionist style of landscape painting began when the Stokes County Arts Council offered a painting class with Artist Craig Richards. Richards has been guiding her artistic painting journey since 2015. Most of her working career was spent as a jewelry store owner and designer, working with diamonds, precious metals, and colored gemstones. As an adolescent, she began capturing images on film with a Brownie camera. Currently, her goal is to have an artist brush or a camera in her hand every day. Using her photo images from beautiful Stokes County, she creates images on canvas and rocks with oil paint. Presently, she is the Board Secretary for the Stokes County Arts Council where she is surrounded by other artists on their creative journey.

You may contact Brown at [KRay-FineArtStudio@gmail.com](mailto:KRay-FineArtStudio@gmail.com). She

signs her work "K-Ray."

After a long career in the computer industry, Young retired in 2019 and began her "second act" as a nature photographer. During 2020, she worked tirelessly to improve her skills. Although she had been behind a camera since middle school, she explained that she had never spent the hours needed to perfect her technique. She took pictures almost daily during 2020 on her property in Stokes County.

In 2024, Young is still "focused on nature." She continues to work on perfecting her photography skills with each image captured. She spends countless hours outside in nature and even had the rare opportunity to take images of a new fawn and a young bear on her property.

"A field covered in red clover, and another filled with Sunflowers brought me joy as I spent time capturing the beauty of blooms, birds and butterflies," Young said. Her goal for each photograph is to capture not only the beauty but also the emotion of the moment.

In addition to photographing nature, Young also captures images during concerts at The Arts Place and at events throughout Stokes

County including events at Hanging Rock State Park. Young was one of the artists selected for the 2024 Novant Art Catalog. Her work is displayed in homes across the United States. Her images have also been published in the local newspaper and used by several performing artists as well as various county publications.

Young grew up in Garner, N.C. She attended both UNC Chapel Hill and NCSU. She finished her degree in 1985 and went on to a long and successful career in the computer industry. During her 33-year tenure, she worked for various companies, however most of her career was spent working for Dell as both a Senior Systems Engineer and an

Enterprise Technologist. She traveled often throughout her career – both within the United States as well as internationally.

Young currently lives on 53 acres in Stokes County with her husband Randy and their Gordon Setter, Grits. You may contact Young at [patty\\_young@surry.net](mailto:patty_young@surry.net).

This exhibit will be on display July 1-August 15 in the Apple Gallery. The Stokes County Arts Council is open to the public Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sunday 12-6 p.m. For additional information about the exhibit, please contact the Stokes County Arts Council at (336) 593-8159 or visit [www.stokesarts.org](http://www.stokesarts.org).

**STOKES COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL**

The Stokes County Arts Council Presents:

An Exhibit of Original Photography  
 by Photographers, Kitty Ray Brown & Patty Young  
 In The Apple Gallery-502 Main Street, Danbury, NC

A Gallery Opening is scheduled for Saturday, July 13 - 3:30-5:00p.m.  
 Exhibit Dates: July 1-August 15, 2024

# In sun or shade, protect your skin against harmful UV rays

Whether you venture outdoors on a clear day or a cloudy one, it's always important to protect your skin against dangerous sun rays. Skin cancer is on the rise.

The National Cancer Institute estimates there were 100,640 new cases of skin melanomas and 8,290 related deaths in the U.S. last year. In 2021, there were an estimated 1.4 million people living with melanoma of the skin.

About 6.1 million people nationwide are treated annually for basal and squamous cell carcinoma—the most common types of skin cancer.

"These are frequently seen in folks that spend a lot of time outdoors—like farmers, landscapers and loggers," noted Amy Johnson, family nurse practitioner and Virginia Farm Bureau Farm Safety Advisory Committee member.

Most skin cancers are caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet light—an invisible kind of radiation that comes from the sun, tanning beds and sunlamps. The sun's UV rays tend to be strongest from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Even on an overcast day, up to 80% of the sun's UV rays can penetrate the clouds, according to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration.

"It's possible to burn on overcast and shaded days, so sunscreen should be part of your daily routine when spending time outdoors," Johnson advised.

She added that "anyone with a history of sun exposure should have a yearly skin check with a qualified health professional."

Johnson also recommends paying attention to skin lesions and scheduling an evaluation if any are changing color, shape or size, or if new lesions appear rapidly. Many can be removed through simple in-office procedures if caught early enough.

To reduce skin cancer risk, the

CDC and FDA offer the following recommendations:

- Check the UV Index each day. If the index is 3 or higher in your area, protect your skin from too much exposure to the sun. Many smartphone apps and weather websites provide this information.
- Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher to all uncovered skin before going outside. Check the expiration date.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours and after swimming, sweating or toweling off. Read sunscreen labels for information about its water resistance and reapplication instructions.
- Wear protective clothing like long-sleeved shirts, long pants and skirts. Clothes made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection, and darker colors may offer more protection than lighter colors.
- Wear a tightly woven wide-brimmed hat that shades your face and ears and the back of your neck.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible. Even when in the shade, use sunscreen or wear protective clothing.
- If you take medications, ask your health care professional about sun care precautions—some medications may increase sun sensitivity.

It's also important to protect your eyes from UV rays and reduce the risk of cataracts. Sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB radiation offer the best protection, and wrap-around sunglasses offer additional coverage by shielding the entire eye socket.

Some spray sunscreens have been recalled and shouldn't be used. To find out if your sunscreen has been recalled, visit [fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/drug-recalls](http://fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/drug-recalls).

For more sun safety information and tips, visit [cdc.gov/skin-cancer/sun-safety](http://cdc.gov/skin-cancer/sun-safety).

# Landmark and Blue Ridge Team Up to Help Christmas Cheer with a Toy Drive



Image from the Patrick County Christmas Cheer Website.

Patrick County Christmas Cheer, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, serves children ages 0 – 12 throughout Patrick County. According to Chris Lester, director of the organization, 485 children were served last year.

However, 2024 will be a different story for the organization, as one of the main donors is unable to supply the bulk of the toys given out each year. So, The Landmark Center and Blue Ridge Therapy Connection are teaming up to hold a Christmas in July Toy Drive to benefit Christmas Cheer.

According to Lisa Martin, director of community relations for Landmark, "Toys and donations will be collected during the dates of July 14-25 at each facility. Boxes will be set up in the main lobby for toy donations, and monetary donations

may be given to the receptionist on duty."

New, unwrapped toys suitable for ages 0-12 are requested. Checks may be made out to Patrick County Christmas Cheer. For more information about the program, who it serves, or to make an online donation, visit the website [patrickcountychristmascheer.com](http://patrickcountychristmascheer.com).

"We look forward to helping this excellent organization achieve its goals this year," said Ashleigh Keeran, marketing and admissions director at Blue Ridge. "Our facilities are dedicated to the health and well-being of everyone in our county."

Any questions about donations can be directed to Martin at (276) 694-3050 extension 504.

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## Ruby McAlexander Cooper

Ruby McAlexander Cooper, 74, of Stuart, VA passed away on Saturday, July 6, 2024. She was born in Patrick County, VA on October 11, 1949, to the late Noah McAlexander and Maggie Conner McAlexander. In addition to her parents, she is also preceded in death by her husband, James Herbert Cooper Jr., and brother, Dewey McAlexander.



per, Peyton Cooper, and Brynlee Cooper; great-grand-children, Brantley Cooper, Piper Moore, and Hudson Moore; sister, Beatrice Martin; and brothers, Cleat McAlexander (Nancy) and Davis McAlexander.

Ruby is survived by her two sons, James Cooper (Sherry), and Kelvin Wright; grand-children, Nicholas Cooper, Megan Moore (Luke), Kayleigh Bryan (Phillip), Ashlyn Edwards (Noah), Lindsay Co-

son Harbour, nine great-grandchildren, Alyssa, Caylee, Everly, Camden, Aubree, Ada, Jordan, Gabriel, and Savannah; three siblings, Ray Wood (Cheryl), Wanda Hopkins, Michael Wood (Veda), and many beloved nieces and nephews.

A funeral service will be held on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, at 2:00 pm at Norris Funeral Services, Martinsville Chapel, with Pastor Dan Schelling and Brother David Naff officiating. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service. The burial will follow at Fairystone Church Cemetery in Stuart, VA.

## Linda Wood Harbour (Hopkins)

Mrs. Linda Wood Harbour (Hopkins), age 81 of Stuart, Virginia passed away peacefully after a long courageous battle with cancer on Wednesday, July 3, 2024. She was born in Rockingham County, North Carolina on May 18, 1943, to the late Johnnie Beamer Wood and Lottie Muriel Clifton Wood.



In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her first husband, Gerald Camden Harbour; her second husband, Paul Wayne Hopkins; and a great-granddaughter, Baby Brown. Linda was a member of Banister Springs Primitive Baptist Church. She graduated from Meadows of Dan High School, Class of 1961. She was an avid University of Virginia Cavaliers basketball fan. She worked as an associate of Walmart in Stuart for 18 years and loved her work family. Linda was

loved by everyone for her sweet, caring, and kind nature. She was a wonderful mom, grandmother, great-grandmother, wife, sister, aunt, and friend.

Linda is survived by two children, Gerald Harbour (Lisa) and Cynthia Brown (Tony); step-daughter, Anne Marguerite Dirks (Tim); seven grandchildren, Anthony Brown (Amber), Justin Harbour (Kendall), Christina Mabe (Mikie), Joshua Harbour, Corey Thompson, Jordan Harbour (Ariel), and Madi-

A funeral service for Linda will be held on Sunday, July 7, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. at Moody Funeral Home Chapel with Elder Troy Simpson officiating. Burial will follow in the Plasters Family Cemetery in Vesta, Virginia. The family will receive friends Saturday evening from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Plasters Family Cemetery, c/o Judy Farmer, 46 Old Place Lane, Hillsville, VA 24343. Online condolences may be sent by visiting [www.moodyfuneralservices.com](http://www.moodyfuneralservices.com).

# Mobile Clinic sets up in different location

Connect Health & Wellness' Mobile Health Clinic will be in the parking lot across from Spring Drug from 1-6 p.m. on July 10, 17, and 31. Walk-ins only. No preregistration.

The Mobile Dental Clinic will be in the parking lot across from Spring Drug from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. on July 15, 22 and 29. Call (276) 638-0787 to register.

Bring a photo ID and list of medications to all visits. Bring insurance card or proof of income if you don't have insurance.

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Walk-ins only; no preregistration. Mobile Health (HSA) will be set up in parking lot across from Spring Drug. Mobile Dental (HSA) will be set up in parking lot across from Spring Drug in Patrick Springs.

**INSURANCE**  
Everyone should bring photo ID and list of medications to all visits. Please bring insurance card if you have insurance, or proof of income (3 months of pay stubs, W-2, or Social Security Income letter) if you don't have insurance. Walk-ins are not accepted unless parking lot across from Spring Drug in Patrick Springs.

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**Meetings**

**Thursday, July 11**  
The Patrick County School Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. in the School Board Office.

**Tuesday, July 16**  
The Patrick County Planning Commission will meet at 6 p.m. in the second floor conference room of the Patrick County Administration Building.

**Wednesday, July 17**  
The Stuart Town Office will meet at 7 p.m. in the town office.

**Events**

**Wednesday, July 10**  
The Patrick County Food Bank will hold distribution at the Stuart site from 8:30-11 a.m. and from 5-6:30 p.m., at Ararat starting at 8:30 a.m., and at Meadows of Dan starting at 5:30 p.m.

**Thursday, July 11**  
The Patrick County Senior Citizens group will meet at 11 a.m. in the Hooker Building at Rotary Field. Entertainment will be provided by Philip Adams. Beverages will be provided. Attendees are asked to bring salads and/or desserts to share.

The Patrick County Library will hold an Etiquette Made Easy class starting at 2:30 p.m. Registration is required by calling (276) 694-3352.

**Saturday, July 13**  
The Patrick Springs Ruritan Club will hold a fish fry dinner from 4-7 p.m. at Patrick Springs Park to help raise funds to help the club sponsor community service projects. The meal will include fried fish, beans, corn, slaw, hush puppies, a drink, and dessert. There will be a dessert auction of pies and cakes after the meal.

**Sunday, July 14**  
The Patrick County Historical Society will host county native Ron Spencer to talk about his recently published memoir/family history, "Half Penny: You Can Make It If That's All You've Got," 2:30 p.m. at the museum.

The descendants of John Preston Williams will hold their annual family reunion at the Hughes picnic shelter in Trot Valley. Please bring a covered dish. Lunch will start at 1 p.m.

**Monday, July 15**  
The Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) Board will meet at 12:30 p.m. in the Hooker Exhibit Hall of the Frith Economic Development Center. This is a public meeting, but the board will not receive public comment.

**Monday, July 15 - Friday, July 19**  
Pilot View Baptist Church in Hillsville is holding Vacation Bible School from 6-8 p.m. If your child needs a ride call (276) 692-8693 and leave a message.

**Saturday, July 20**  
Providence United Methodist Church men's group will hold a community breakfast from 7:30-10 a.m. The menu includes bacon, sausage, eggs, apples, gravy, and biscuits.

The seventh annual Rock Castle Reunion will be held at 12 p.m. at Woolwine Methodist Church. Attendees are encouraged to bring old photographs, artifacts, stories, and covered dishes. Email Beverly at rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com or call 276-692-9626 with questions.

49th annual Elgin Reunion. Potluck starts at noon at Fairystone Fire Station, Stuart, VA.

**Saturday, July 27**  
Providence United Methodist Church will hold a Vacation Bible School from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lunch will be provided for participants for ages 4-12.

Mayo Mountain Church will hold a Vacation Bible School from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Ongoing**

Free Community Meal, every 4th Wednesday, 5 p.m., Raven Rock Wesleyan Church, 1912 Raven Rock Road, Ararat. Take out or dine in. Call Scott or Nann Phillips at (276) 773-6004 or email pastor@ravenrockchurch.org.

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 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 Stuart Elementary School Running Club will hit the pavements along the sidewalks in town on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

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

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.

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.

The Carroll County Genealogy Club is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The Willis Gap Community Center Members Meeting, the first Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

The Willis Gap Community Center "Appalachian Acoustic Open Jam" is every Friday. Doors open at 6 p.m. for food. Music and dancing is 6:30-9 p.m.

The Willis Gap Community Center "Golden Oldies Open Jam" is the last Tuesday of the month. Doors open at 6 p.m. for food; music and dancing from 6:30-9 p.m.

The Carroll County Genealogy Club is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Colleges, universities agree to protect veteran benefits**

Each of the leaders of Virginia's public colleges and universities, including the chancellor of the Commonwealth's community college system, have agreed to take all necessary action to ensure no student or prospective student is further adversely impacted by the gap in time from July 1 to when HB 6004 and SB 6012 are passed and signed to fully repeal and reverse the tuition waiver eligibility changes to the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program and other similarly impacted programs.

"I personally spoke with the Presidents of all 16 public colleges and universities in the Com-

monwealth, as well as the Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, and everyone agreed to not allow this gap in time to disadvantage or harm our military heroes, first responders, and their families," Gov. Glenn Youngkin said when making the announcement last week.

"I look forward to the House and Senate returning on July 18th as announced and sending to my desk HB 6004 and SB 6012, which fully repeal the damaging language, without caveats or conditions, and provide a total of \$65 million in each year of the biennium to this important program," Youngkin added.

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by Linda Thistle

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

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦**

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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# State agencies provide update on spongy moth infestation, treatment activities

The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) are joining forest health professionals across the Commonwealth to monitor the invasive spongy moth (formerly known as the Gypsy Moth). Long established in Virginia, the caterpillar with a voracious appetite favors oak trees but will also feed on many types of hardwoods. In areas with large infestations, the caterpillars can strip entire mountainsides of foliage.

In 2024, the most severe damage has been observed in the Northern Shenandoah Valley and the mountains west of Harrisonburg and Staunton. During an aerial survey in June, DOF Forest Health staff observed damage to more than 60,000 acres. While spongy moth caterpillar feeding can remove all leaves from a tree, recovery is possible. Most trees typically survive one or two years of defoliation. Unfortunately, if a tree is weak or damaged to begin with, spongy moth feeding will lead to tree decline.

In early May, federal and state agencies treated select public areas with aerial biopesticide applications to suppress spongy moth populations. DOF surveys have recently observed a decline in spongy moth populations following the bio-control measures, a hopeful sign for our forests. Spongy moth caterpillars are also often susceptible to both an Entomophaga fungus and nucleopolyhedrosis virus, which can cause mass population crashes.

“While spongy moth infestation is severe this year, it’s encouraging to see biocontrols killing caterpillars in impacted areas,” said Forest Health Program Manager Lori Chamberlin. “These counter-

measures can greatly reduce populations, resulting in less damage to our forests next year.”

## Spongy Moth Control Measures

Landowners looking for control methods for spongy moth can find information on DOF’s website: [https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/FT0068\\_Spongy-Moth-Control-Methods.pdf](https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/FT0068_Spongy-Moth-Control-Methods.pdf)

## Cooperative Spongy Moth Suppression Program

For communities seeking additional spongy moth control measures, VDACS administers a Cooperative Spongy Moth Suppression Program in collaboration with local governments and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Applications for this program must be submitted by county governments. Spongy moth suppression program guideline details are available on the VDACS website.

“Limiting populations of spongy moth will never eradicate the pest from Virginia, but the suppression program is designed to provide relief and control in areas suffering from significant damage,” said VDACS Office of Plant Industry Services Program Manager David Gianino. “Interested localities can conduct spongy moth egg mass surveys between July and November and submit a treatment proposal for participation before November 15, 2024, for the 2025 treatment season. Localities are encouraged to review the guidelines and determine if they want to perform the required work to qualify for the program.”

To learn more about spongy moth visit the DOF website. For more information on spongy moth quarantines and suppression programs, visit the VDACS website.

# Continued claims for unemployment insurance increase

Last week, Virginia Works noted that 2,112 unemployment insurance weekly initial claims were filed during the week ending June 29, which is 4.2 percent lower than last week’s 2,205 claims and 15.1 percent lower than the comparable week of last year (2,487). Nearly 83 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (56 percent) were Administrative and Support and Waste Management (215); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (211); Health Care and Social Assistance (195); Retail Trade (160); and Accommodation and Food Services (136).

Continued weeks claims (16,433) were 2.4 percent higher than last week (16,046) and were 23.4 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (13,313). Nearly 93 percent of claimants self-re-

ported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (59 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (2,429); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,240); Health Care and Social Assistance (1,637); Accommodation and Food Services (1,379); and Retail Trade (1,376).

A person who has already filed an initial claim and who has experienced a week of unemployment files a continued claim to claim benefits for that week of unemployment. On a weekly basis, continued claims reflect a good approximation of the current number of insured unemployed workers filing for UI benefits, and are a good indicator of labor market conditions. While continued claims are not a leading indicator, they provide confirming evidence of the direction of the economy.

# Drug, contraband shakedown yields results

Safety and security improved at Lawrenceville Correctional Center on Friday, June 14, when Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) corrections team members completed a drug and contraband shakedown.

Findings from the operation include:

- Approximately 100 Buprenorphine strips
- Three blue packages containing a white, powdery substance
- Several loose pills
- A quantity of an unknown, powdery substance
- Several cellphones
- Several cellphone charging blocks
- Cellphone charging cords
- An undisclosed amount of cash
- Cellphones and their accessories are considered contraband at VADOC facilities.

The VADOC will assume control of Lawrenceville, the only privately operated prison in Virginia, at the end of the current contract term, August 1.

“Thank you to our corrections team members for conducting this thorough shakedown at Lawrenceville Correctional Center,” said VADOC Director Chad Dotson. “We continue to have a zero-tolerance policy towards drugs and contraband at our facilities. The cost of poisonous drugs and dangerous contraband entering our prisons is simply too high to expect anything except a laser-focus on safety and security.”

The Virginia Department of Corrections continues to monitor the intake of contraband into its facilities. If you have any information, you can call anonymously to (540) 830-9280.

# Arrests Reported

The Patrick County Sheriff’s Office reported the following:

\*Debra Cassell Gunnell, 64, of Ferrum, was charged June 14 with two counts of probation violation on felony offense. Senior Deputy J.C. Fortner made the arrest for Franklin County.

\*Seth Harmon Wade, 34, of Stuart, was charged on June 15 with property destruction. Sgt. C.L. Elgin was the arresting officer.

\*David Edward, 41, of Woolwine, was charged June 17 with assault. Martinsville PD made the arrest for Patrick.

\*Brittney Michelle Woodie, 32, of Pulaski, was charged June 17 with three counts of fail to appear. Deputy C.A. Strother was the arresting officer.

\*Autumn Marie Nickerson, 34, address unavailable, was charged June 18 with probation violation. Senior VA State Trooper J.N. Mabe was the arresting officer.

\*Corey Caine Jamison, 35, address unavailable, was charged June 19 with probation violation. Senior Deputy M. Sowder was the arresting officer.

\*Lauren Audianna Hayden, 25, of Mt. Airy, N.C., was charged June 19 with arson. Investigator J. W. Kruse made the arrest.

\*Mason Wyatt Wasoski, 22, of Stuart, was charged June 20 with one count each strangulation, destruction of property and assault and battery. Sgt. C.L. Elgin made the arrest.

Jared Ray Lawson, 24, of Critz, was charged June 21 with animal cruelty by Senior Deputy C. Gilbert.

\*Ronald Lee Cassell, 56, of Meadows of Dan, was charged June 22 with drive while intoxicated, 1st offense. Senior VA State Trooper R.S. Lawson made the arrest.

\*Billy Joe Plaster, 46, of Salem, was charged June 23 with fail to appear. Henry County made the arrest for Patrick County.

\*Anthony Wayne Harris, Jr., 33, address unavailable, was charged June 23 with one count each probation violation and fail to appear. Deputy S. Horn and Senior Deputy D.A. Ullring were the arresting officers.

\*Lonnie Lee Howell, 49, of Stuart, was charged June 23 with fail to comply with terms of pretrial services. Sgt. L.K. Carroll Jr. was the arresting officer.

\*Lori Hollandsworth Blais, 34, of Stuart, was charged June 25 with fail to appear. Western Va Regional Jail made the arrest for Patrick County.

\*Griffith Coy Goodyear, 34, of Patrick County Jail, was charged June 25 with three counts of probation violation on felony offense. Se-

nior Deputy R.W. Campbell made the arrest for the City of Radford.

\*James Dean Sawyer, 42, of Mt. Airy, N.C., was charged June 26 with warrant of extradition. Senior Deputy Douglas Perry was the arresting officer.

\*Cory Arrington, 33, of Mt. Airy, N.C., was charged June 26 with fail to appear. Sgt. D. Celozzi was the arresting officer.

\*Freddie Lee Willard, Jr., 44, of Claudville, was charged June 27 with four counts of destruction of property, two counts petit larceny, and one count grand larceny. Deputy Emily Vernon was the arresting officer.

\*Stephanie Dawn Davis, 45, of Ararat, was charged June 27 with fail to comply with terms of pretrial services. Sgt. D. Celozzi was the arresting officer.

\*Austin Russell Hensley, 21, of Flat Rock, N.C., was charged June 27 with assault. Senior Deputy R.S. Martin made the arrest.

\*Randall Nathan Wall, Jr. was charged June 28 with Lexington, N.C., was charged June 28 with probation violation. Deputy T. Dalton was the arresting officer.

\*Michael Melvin Marshall, 52, of Stuart, was charged June 29 with assault. Senior Deputy M. Sowder made the arrest.

\*James Randolph Strong, 56, of Randleman, N.C., was charged July 1 with assault. Sgt. C.L. Elgin made the arrest.

\*Bradley Hunter Eanes, 46, of Ridgeway, was charged July 1 with probation violation. Martinsville PD made the arrest for Patrick County.

\*Mason Wyatt Wasoski, 22, of Stuart, was charged July 3 with fail to comply with pretrial services. Senior Deputy I.R. Wood was the arresting officer.

\*Jerome Dale Bailey, 63, of Stuart, was charged July 4 with one count each drive while intoxicated, 1st offense and reckless driving. Senior VA State Trooper J.N. Mabe made the arrest.

\*Jerome Dale Bailey, 63, of Stuart, was charged July 4 with one count each drive while intoxicated, 1st offense and reckless driving. Senior VA State Trooper J.N. Mabe made the arrest.

\*Grady Carroll III, 66, of Connelly Springs, N.C., was charged July 4 with assault and battery. VA State Trooper J.D. Cockerham.

\*Ronnie Lee Reed, 33, of Martinsville, was charged July 4 with possess Schedule I or II drugs. Senior Deputy A. Kinney made the arrest.

\*Lisa Pauley, 55, of Bassett, was charged July 5 with petty larceny. Henry County made the arrest for Patrick County.

# Report shows help is needed to maintain 988 staffing levels

Edwin J. Viera

Virginia News Connection

A new report found Virginia’s mental health crisis response can improve.

The “A Better Response” report from the mental health advocacy organization Inseparable reviewed how states can bolster their 988 crisis response services. Virginia has an 87% response rate for 988 calls just under the 90% national standard.

Bruce Crusier, executive director of the nonprofit Mental Health Virginia, thinks the state has done well so far with financing but more work needs to be done to get the state where it needs to be.

“Ultimately, the staffing has to be priority because without proper training and enough help then people will burn out, get frustrated, and then leave,” Crusier pointed out. “Because again, there’s such a shortage of mental health professionals.”

The federal Health Resources and Services Administration put all of Virginia under a mental health professional shortage. Crusier noted there is no easy solution. He thinks funding can be allocated in the next budget for a multipronged approach to build up Virginia’s mental health workforce and remove barriers to people who want to practice in the state. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.



Inseparable’s report showed a host of improvements to national systems can ensure states have the best crisis response systems. Virginia has already taken one step by establishing sustainable financing for 988 and crisis response services.

Angela Kimball, chief advocacy officer for Inseparable, said states need to have appropriate accountability measures.

“By having these accountability pieces, this allows legislators to oversee the system over the long haul,” Kimball pointed out. “And to set up the structures for continuous learning, continuous system improvement.”

She added data collection, annual legislative reporting and system coordination are three ways to ensure the system’s high standards. Kimball added system coordination between 988 and 911 is key to reducing reliance on first responders for mental health emergencies.

# Study examines conservation programs that support pollinators

Targeted voluntary conservation practices can help improve and support pollinator populations while benefiting agricultural production nationwide.

That was a message conveyed in a Conservation Outcomes webinar hosted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service during National Pollinator Week. The webinar presented results from a study conducted by Virginia Tech in collaboration with USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project examining the value and effectiveness of voluntary pollinator conservation efforts throughout the U.S.

"We want to know where pollinator habitat enhancements are most beneficial," said Dr. Elissa Olimpi, a lead researcher for the project.

The study analyzed 51 voluntary, USDA-funded NRCS conservation practices on privately owned lands, including wildflower plantings and grasslands, pasturelands, forest and wetlands.

Researchers found that the NRCS practices create or enhance seminatural habitats and contribute to the national supply of pollinators

at a higher rate than if those lands were not enrolled in those practices.

"USDA-funded pollinator habitat enhancements are indeed supporting pollinator conservation and protecting pollination services," Olimpi said.

She explained that while many current conservation practices are in landscapes where expected benefits are highest, there are opportunities for improving conservation efforts in specific regions.

The study identified certain regions in the U.S. that are vulnerable to future pollinator habitat loss from urban development or intensive cropland expansion, such as in the Great Plains and the Pacific Northwest and along the East Coast.

"If we know which seminatural habitats are most vulnerable to (loss) in the future, we can think about prioritizing (conservation) in those areas," Olimpi said.

The study also examined and identified cases of pollinator mismatch—areas in the U.S. with a high demand for pollination but a low supply of pollinators like wild bees.

For example, "a crop like blueberries is highly dependent on pollinators," Olimpi explained. "Pollinator mismatch can occur when you have a crop that has a high dependency on pollinators, but at the same time, pollinators are limited by a lack of high-quality habitat in the surrounding landscape."

Over 75% of important food crops depend on pollinators, and scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of animal pollinators. But wild pollinator populations continue to face steep declines from a range of stressors like habitat and forage loss, environmental stressors and pest pathogens—threatening crop production and food security.

"It's very important to us both from an ag perspective but also from an ecosystem perspective to support these healthy populations across our landscapes," said Izzy Hill, USDA's honeybee and pollinator research coordinator. "We need pollinators, but they need us too."

To read the full Virginia Tech report, visit [bit.ly/45FVA7X](https://bit.ly/45FVA7X). To learn more about voluntary conservation opportunities, visit your local USDA service center.

## Virginia's 'ahead of the curve' in advancing universal broadband access plans, officials say

Amid a national movement to close the digital divide, Virginia continues to lead the way toward universal broadband access.

Broadband providers, vendors, state officials and other stakeholders heard about Virginia's progress in extending broadband infrastructure during the Mid-Atlantic Broadband Summit in Richmond in June.

Last summer, Virginia netted \$1.48 billion in federal Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment grant program funds. The nationwide program awards \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access through funding, planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, the lead agency for administering the program, and Virginia Tech secured an additional \$250 million in BEAD funding for correcting the Federal Communications Commission's national broadband map early last year.

Virginia has been "ahead of the curve" in deploying broadband, noted Tamarah Holmes, Virginia's broadband office director. She highlighted innovative efforts like initiating the development of a statewide broadband availability map in 2010 and launching the Virginia Tele-

communication Initiative in 2017 to spearhead expansion efforts.

Since 2017, VATI has awarded \$935 million to connect over 300,000 locations to broadband—leveraging \$1.2 billion in private and local resources. In April, 5,000 locations received access to broadband through the program, Holmes said.

Virginia also was the first state to submit its BEAD 5-Year Plan and initial proposal.

"While we've made some progress, of course we have a long ways to go," Holmes noted.

BEAD funds will build upon VATI's work to reach the remaining unserved homes, businesses and community institutions across Virginia that lack existing broadband infrastructure.

The Virginia housing department launched the BEAD challenge process last fall to confirm that all locations without access to high-speed internet and participation in an existing deployment project are included in the initiative. Virginia "challenged" over 1.9 million service claims on the national broadband map and added over 80,000 unserved and underserved locations.

DHCD has since narrowed its initial list of over 162,000 BEAD-eligible locations to around 115,000 locations, which they are working to finalize with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

"We all have the same goal in the room, for the BEAD program and the state broadband office of getting to 100% coverage across Virginia," said Chandler Vaughan, senior policy analyst for Virginia's broadband office. "But getting to 100% is only as good as the maps are."

The Virginia broadband office will launch its BEAD application process for broadband providers after Virginia's challenge process results and initial proposal are approved.

The summit included an afternoon workshop to help prepare providers for the multi-staged application process, which state officials hope to start up this fall. Virginia's broadband office also plans to push out more technical assistance resources in the coming months.

Virginia's 5-Year Plan also outlines goals for improving broadband affordability and adoption through technological skills training and other programs.

"The wide-ranging benefits of connectivity, including smart farming, building a business online, and telehealth, will keep Virginia competitive in a fast-changing, connected world," the plan states.

To access the approved plan or more information on the state's BEAD program, visit [dhcd.virginia.gov/bead](https://dhcd.virginia.gov/bead).

## Student borrowers affected by courts pausing SAVE program

Edwin J. Viera

Virginia News Connection

Virginia student loan borrowers will feel the effects of federal courts blocking more student loan forgiveness.

The Biden administration forgave around \$3.5 billion of the state's student loan debt, but borrowers will not see reduced payments on July 1, due to court injunctions which could upend the SAVE program. Student loan debt creates burdens whether the borrowers earn their degree or not.

Kelsey Coweger, press secretary for the advocacy group Progress Virginia, said the debts have tanked homeownership rates for younger generations.

"One of the criteria that you're gauged on is how much debt you have and the ability to pay those debts back," Coweger explained. "There is a whole generation of people who are losing these really critical wealth-building apparatuses that have been available to older generations, that will make things harder for them in the long run."

The average Virginia borrower's debt is just under \$40,000 but the state's total student loan debt is \$43 billion. Cowger feels student loan forgiveness has been misunderstood. She noted people using the program are not the ones attending expensive private colleges or getting what some see as "worthless" degrees.

Some blame students' inability to budget as a reason student loan debt has grown. But Cowger pointed out systemic changes have played a role, like states not funding public schools and universities the same way they used to. Now, most of a college's budget comes from tuition.

She argued the federal government could take different steps to help students graduate in a better financial position.

"The government could expand its access to Pell grants," Cowger suggested. "The government could stop taking interest on the student loans that it provides. You know, I don't know that the government should be in the business of making money off the backs of students trying to get an education."

Cowger added a federal regulatory framework could be established so student loans are not predatory. She thinks states funding public colleges should be seen as an investment in an educated workforce, with loans which can and will be repaid. One-third of federal student loan borrowers defaulted on their debt in the last 20 years.

## Correctional facilities close as scheduled

Four VADOC facilities are now officially closed, according to Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) Director Chad Dotson.

The closings of Augusta Correctional Center, Sussex II State Prison, Haynesville Correctional Unit #17 and Stafford Community Corrections Alternative Program (CCAP) were announced in December, a decision made to enhance employee, inmate, and probationer safety, to address longstanding staffing challenges, and in consideration of significant ongoing maintenance costs.

The VADOC confirmed that every employee who wished to remain employed by the agency was able to stay with the department, thanks to the diligence and dedication of the VADOC's Office of Human Resources. This fulfills the goal set by VADOC when the facility closures were announced.

Affected inmates and CCAP probationers were relocated to other VADOC facilities across the state, based on security level and classification.

"I want to place on the record a sincere thank you to the Virginia Department of Corrections team members, both past and present, who helped to make Augusta, Sussex II, Haynesville CU, and Stafford CCAP such positive forces for safety, security, and reentry," said Dotson. "Where you work can help form your identity, and I know this decision was not an easy one for many corrections team members. I value their patience and profes-

sionalism as we navigated this difficult, but necessary decision that ultimately enhances public safety and increases operational efficiency."

"I also thank our Office of Human Resources team for their commitment to ensuring every person who wanted to stay with the agency was able to do so. The VADOC is nothing without its corrections team members and I thank those who chose to stay. I hope the employees who accepted transfers are enjoying their new work locations, and wish those who either sought other employment opportunities or accepted enhanced retirement or severance benefits the best in their future endeavors," he added.

The agency will continue to uphold its mission of ensuring public safety by providing effective incarceration, supervision, and evidence-based reentry services. More information can be found on the VADOC website.

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# David Wax Museum brings exuberant 'Mexo-Americana' to Blue Ridge Music Center on July 13



David Wax Museum - Photo by Anthony Mulcahy



The Travis Williams Group

David Wax Museum will perform as part of the Deep Roots, Many Voices: Summer Outdoor Concert Series at 7 p.m., Saturday, July 13, in the Blue Ridge Music Center's outdoor amphitheater on the Blue Ridge Parkway just south of Galax, Va. The Travis Williams Group will open the show.

David Wax Museum is a folk and roots rock band blending traditional Mexican son music with Americana in what they call "Mexo-Americana." David Wax and Suz Slezak are the plucky husband-and-wife duo behind the eclectic group that has built a reputation around energetic live shows and sonically adventurous albums.

Wax became interested in the

folk music of rural Mexico while in college and is influenced heavily by Mexican son music, which brings together musical elements from Spanish, African, and indigenous cultures. Wax sings and plays the jarana jarocho, a Mexican instrument similar to a guitar. Slezak is a vocalist and fiddler who also plays quijada, a percussion instrument made from a donkey's jawbone.

The group's genre-defying, shape-shifting personality is on full display with everything from nuanced downtempo songs to the boisterous and bombastic, making it obvious how a band with this kind of breadth has comfortably shared the stage with acts as diverse as The Avett Brothers, Latin legends Los

Lobos and Buena Vista Social Club, and indie darlings Gregory Alan Isakov and Mandolin Orange (now Watchhouse).

The Travis Williams Group is known for original compositions influenced by traditional Arabic Maqam music, jazz, traditional folk, and world music. The quintet of world-class musicians features multi-instrumentalist Colin Al-lured, Ken Simonds on bass, Kinard Douthit on flute, Bill Smith on percussion, and Williams on the oud, an 11-string fretless lute. The oud is the oldest guitar-style instrument still played today. Williams' oud is distinctive because of its floating bridge, which gives the instrument a tighter, more focused sound.

Tickets are \$20 for adults. Children 12 and younger are admitted free of charge. Advance tickets are available at [BlueRidgeMusicCenter.org](http://BlueRidgeMusicCenter.org). Tickets can be purchased on the evening of the show at the admission gates.

Parking opens at 5:15 p.m. and is free. The gates open at 5:45 p.m. The concert begins at 7 p.m.

The Bluffs Restaurant will offer homestyle food and beverages for purchase during the concert. Visitors may bring their own food and beverages into the amphitheater. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted.

The presenting sponsors for the series are W.L.A. Trucking and Yadkin Arts Council.

# Program, book release for Perry Family Scholarship set for July 28

Tom Perry's Laurel Hill Publishing announced the publication of Patrick Pioneers Part One: One Hundred Thoroughly Researched Stories of Patrick County People and Places by Beverly Belcher Woody. The 400 page book will be available for the Tom Talks History program on July 28 at 2 p.m. at the Ararat Ruritan Club, which is located at 4711 Ararat Highway in Ararat, Virginia, as a fundraiser for the Perry Family Scholarship, which gives a \$500 each year to at least one Patrick County High School senior. To be considered, applicants must write a 1,000 word essay on a historical topic of their choice. Eight scholarships have been given in honor of Historian and Author Thomas D. "Tom" Perry's parents Erie Meredith and Betty Hobbs Perry.

Beverly Belcher Woody writes a weekly column for The Enterprise on which this book is based.

"Most authors come to me, but in this case, I wanted to publish this book as I believe it is one of the best books ever written on Patrick County history," Publisher Tom Perry said. "I am thrilled to have helped Beverly get this book in print and that we can help students at our alma mater Patrick County High School get started in their college careers."

Woody was born and raised in the Big A community of Patrick County,



Beverly Belcher Woody has teamed with Tom Perry's Laurel Hill Publishing to publish Patrick Pioneers Part One. The book will be available at the Tom Talks History program on July 28 at 2 p.m. at the Ararat Ruritan Club in Ararat.

Virginia. She grew up with a passion for history, conducting her first interview with mountain folks at the age of 10.

Upon graduation from Patrick County High School, Woody spent the next seventeen years working in local textile mills. When the factories closed, Woody earned an associate's degree in paralegal studies from Patrick & Henry Community College and worked for local district and circuit courts as a deputy clerk for the next fifteen years. While working for the court system, Woody earned her bachelor's degree from Old Dominion University, took master's courses from Averett and

**Patrick Pioneers Part One**


\$19.99

One Hundred Thoroughly Researched Stories of People and Places from Patrick County Virginia

\*This is one of the best book every written on Patrick County Virginia History.\*  
--Historian Tom Perry

Beverly Belcher Woody writes a weekly article for The Enterprise, Patrick County, Virginia's newspaper. This is the first volume of these stories.

Patrick Pioneers Part One



Beverly Belcher Woody

Beverly Belcher Woody

Tom Perry's Laurel Hill Publishing announced the publication of "Patrick Pioneers Part One." The new book is available for \$19.99 on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0D8JPX52F>.

Liberty University, and completed her master's in education at Regent University. At the age of 50, Woody left the court system and earned her teacher licensure in history and English.

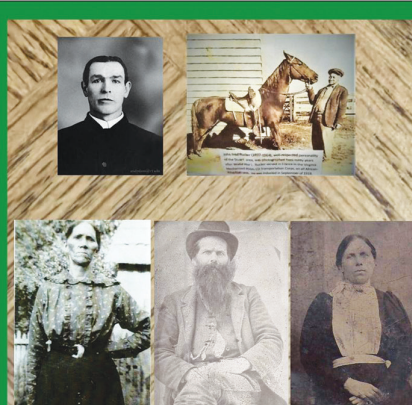
Woody teaches United States History to sixth graders at Martinsville Middle School and writes a weekly local history column called "Patrick Pioneers" for Patrick County's oldest newspaper, The Enterprise.

She serves as Regent of the Patrick Henry National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution and is on the Board of Directors of both the Patrick County Historical Society and Museum and the Martinsville-Henry County Heritage Museum. She was named "Teacher of the Year" in 2023 by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

Woody and her husband Mark live

**Patrick Pioneers Part One**

Patrick Pioneers Part One



Beverly Belcher Woody

Beverly Belcher Woody

in the Snow Creek section of Franklin County, Virginia with their assortment of animals. She may be reached at [rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com](mailto:rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com).

Patrick Pioneers Part One is available for \$19.99 on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0D8JPX52F>.

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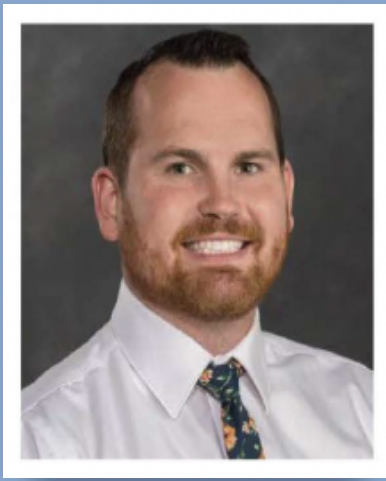
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**Winners of Music Competition  
in Vesta announced**



The quilts were all made by Freedom Quilty Ladies pictured.

The Vesta Community Center Fourth of July music competition was a big success this year, in spite of a mid-afternoon downpour. Winners included:

**Guitar**

- Adults –
- 1st Place - Jared Boyd
- 2nd Place - Rex Smith
- 3rd Place – Dayme Shelor

**Mandolin**

- Adults –
- 1st Place – David Helms
- 2nd Place – Jared Boyd

**Fiddle**

- Adults –
- 1st Place – Matt Kirwan
- 2nd Place – Dayme Shelor
- 3rd Place – Jason Phillips

**Flat Footing**

- Adults –
- 1st Place – Mason Winfrey
- 2nd Place – John Killon
- 3rd Place – Leon Fralin

**Children**

- 1st Place – Annie Wilson

**Banjo Competition**

- Adults –
- 1st Place - Jared Boyd
- 2nd Place – Melvine Severt
- 3rd Place – Jason Phillips

**Banjo – Teens**

- 1st Place – Paxton Ashe

**Dobro Competition**

- Adults –
- 1st Place – Jackie Dunevant

**Bluegrass Bands**

- 1st Place – Carolina Crawdads
- 2nd Place – Mountain Melodies
- 3rd Place – Melvin Severt and Jerry Hopkins

**Old Time Bands**

- 1st Place – New River Wranglers
- 2nd Place – Twin County Ramblers

**Vocals**

- Adults –
- 1st Place – Mick and Sandra Bridwell
- 2nd Place – Marcie Horne
- 3rd Place – Tommy Nicholes



Presentation of colors by the VFW Post 8467 were followed by local veterans being called up to accept a gift of a quilt.



Richard Conner and his wife Ann accepted the quilt made by Leah Eckman.



The Mountaintop Quilters of Vesta and Meadows of Dan donated a Christmas quilt for a raffle to benefit the community center. Carla Frisch was the lucky winner of the colorful quilt this year.

*We are hiring!*

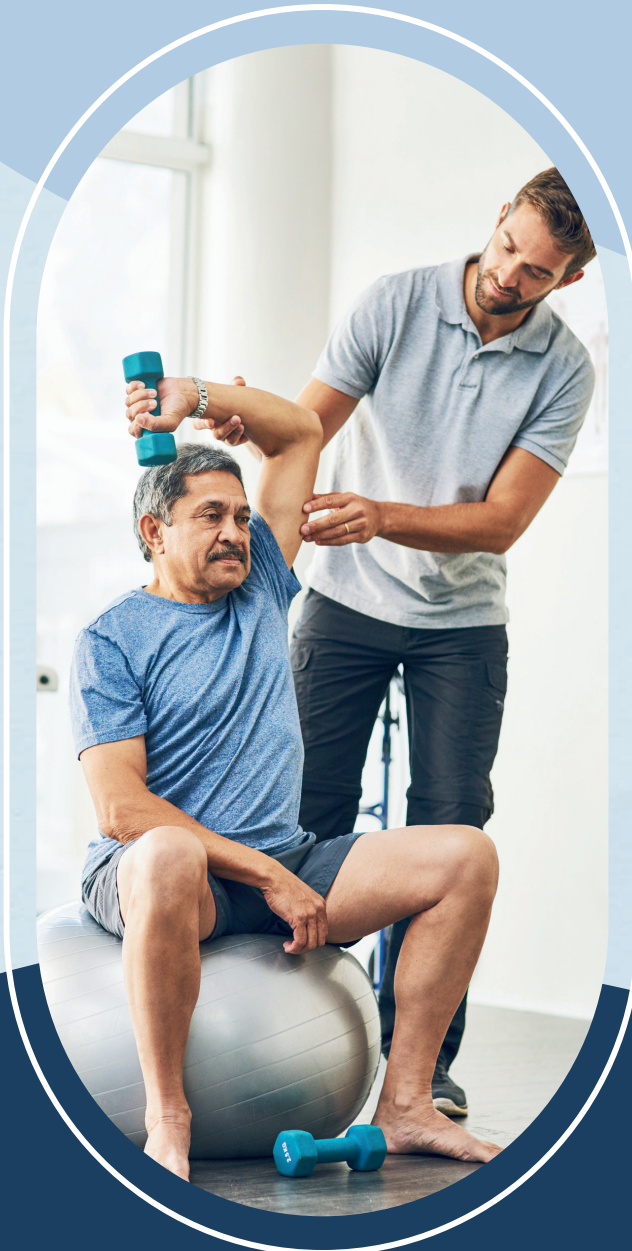
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