



THE ENTERPRISE

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

Former Trump security detail questions assassination attempt

By Debbie Hall
 Questions persist about the circumstances surrounding the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump, who is now seeking a second term in office. The incident occurred on July 13 in Butler, Pennsylvania, where one person was killed and others, including Trump, were wounded.

“The biggest elephant in the room, and my biggest question is” did the counter sniper observer team receive the message that there was a questionable person on the grounds or on the roof, Eddie Deck Jr. asked.

A retired FBI agent and Marine, Deck and his company, XMark Group, worked for the Trump campaign in 2015-16, first as a personal protection detail (PPD), starting in June 2015. The Secret Service began providing



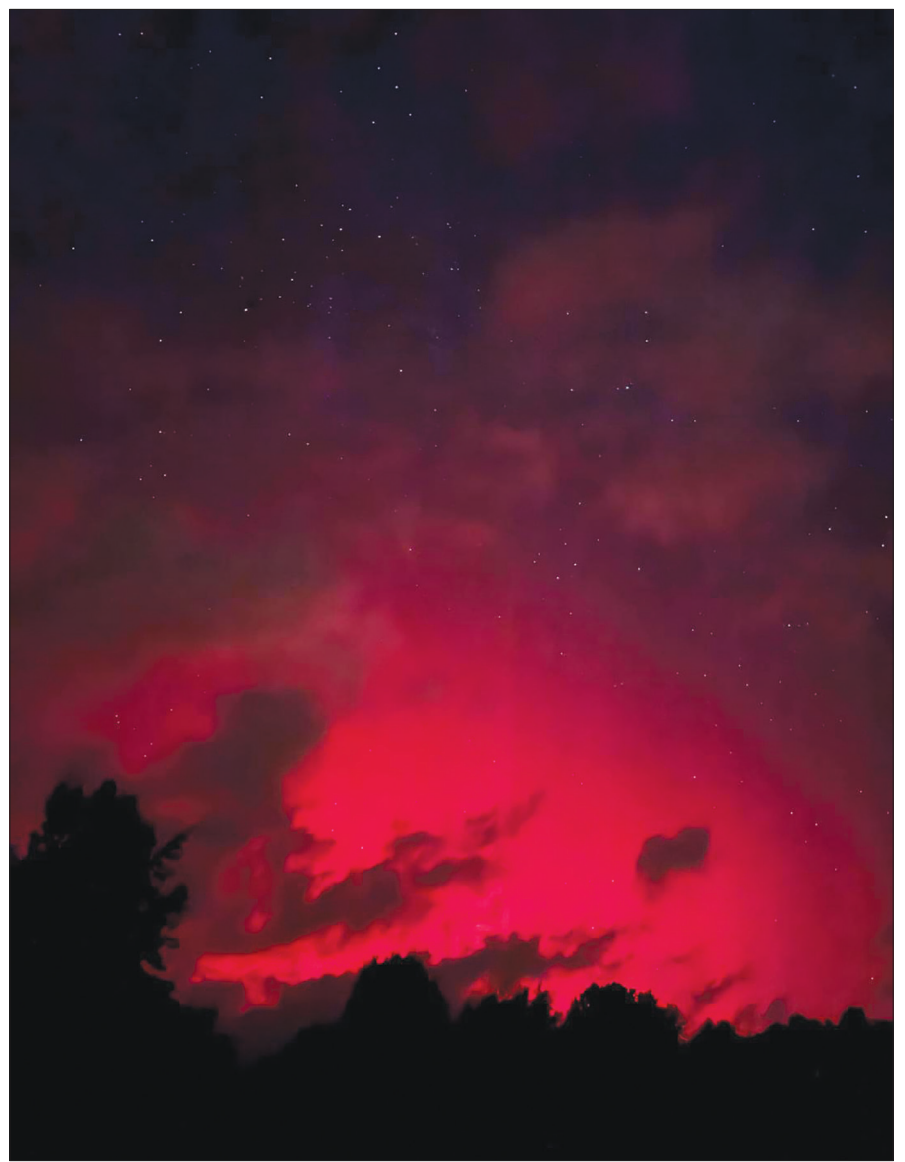
Eddie Deck Jr. is pictured with former Pres. Donald Trump. Deck and his company have served as Trump’s personal protection detail. (Contributed)

Trump’s security in November 2015. Then, Deck and his team of six to eight other retired FBI agents and retired NYPD officers, began providing event

security at various venues.

When all was said and done, that included 73 Trump rallies in 2015-16, as well as Trump’s 2017 inaugu-

(See Former Trump Security p.3)



Meteor shower lights up skies

A stunning meteor shower known as the Perseids was visible late Sunday/early Monday in Patrick County. Perseids are visible annually, mid-July to September 1, as it passes through. Up to 100 meteors were expected per hour, as it moved at a speed of 133,200 miles per hour (214,365 kilometers per hour), according to online reports. (Photo by Ali Wood)

20th annual Folk Fair set for Saturday

By Taylor Boyd

The 20th annual Meadows of Dan Folk Fair is scheduled for Saturday, August 17. The event will span from the Meadows of Dan Baptist Church to the Meadows of Dan Community Center, running from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This year, the Meadows of Dan Community Association has partnered with the Meadows of Dan Ruritan Club, celebrating the Ruritan’s 75th anniversary and the fair’s 20th anniversary.

Trinity Goad, president of the association, said this year marks the Ruritan’s 75th anniversary and it’s the 20th anniversary for the fair.

“They asked if they could do a little thing during our festival and they provided a band for the closing,” he said. The Ruritans plan to serve some cake.

Leftover biscuits will be offered at the Meadows of Dan Community Center from 2-4 p.m., Goad said, adding that “we will start the morning at Maberry Church with a history of the church, provided by Jeff Garrison and Mike Gillette.

A co-owner of Villa Appalachia Winery will offer a presentation about wine at the Meadows of Dan Community Center, and “we will also have the Sauerkraut Band at Primitive Coffee, the Country Boys will be performing at the Community Center, Villa Appalachia will have Jazz Sounds of the Triquetra, and we will finish our day with an Old Fashioned Singing at Concord Church, located on Concord Road in Meadows of

Dan,” Goad said.

“Vendors will be on site selling items such as metal cut outs, crochet items, handmade soaps, lotions, jewelry, and local authors Tom Perry and Bonnie Turner will be onsite,” Goad said, adding that Stanburn Winery will be “selling their award winning wines. This is the last year that Stanburn Winery will be in attendance” because the winery previously announced plans to cease operations.

“Come hungry, because we will have food for sale by the Meadows of Dan Elementary School with their annual Fish Fry. Shans Concessions will be around with their food truck, we will also have LG Confections, along with local baker Monica Hughes, owner of Olivia’s Goodies, who will offer her handmade” confections, he said.

Also, sheep will be sheared throughout the day, and a fiber tent will be located at Poppy’s, Goad said, adding “preserve making the old time way in the parking lot of Jane’s Café.”

“We will also have bouncy things for the kids, and all of the events are free,” he added.

While he notes that weather is always the determining factor in how many people show up, Goad said there’s usually at least 300-1,000 people at each folk fair.

“Last year we had 960 people that came through town,” he said.

The Reynolds Homestead will provide a shuttle service. Parking is available at the Meadows of Dan Baptist Church and in the grassy area of Frontier Farm and Home Center, LLC.

For more details, call Goad at (540) 230-7943.

Folk Fair schedule of events

The 20th annual Meadows of Dan Folk Fair on Saturday, August 17, will feature activities and performances to cover every age group.

A smattering includes:

- 9:30 a.m.: Mike Gillette and Jeff Garrison will present a history of the Mayberry Church at the Mayberry Presbyterian Church.
 - 10:30 a.m.: A presentation about wine from Villa Appalachia Winery will take place at the community center.
 - 12-2 p.m.: The Country Boys will perform.
 - 1-4 p.m.: The jazz group Triquetra will entertain guests at Villa Appalachia Winery.
 - 2 p.m.: A celebration for 75 years of Ruritans will begin at the community center, followed by a performance.
 - 5 p.m.: old-fashioned singing at Concord Church.
 - Throughout the day: A prayer tent will be situated at Meadows of Dan Baptist Church; sheep will be sheared, and peach butter-making will be underway at Jane’s Café.
 - Approximately 30 vendors will participate in the folk fair, and there will be free activities for kids.
 - Meadows of Dan Elementary School’s Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) will host its annual fish fry, and food vendors such as Shan’s Concessions, LG Confections, and Wacky Waco Waffle will be on-site.
- Refer to the Meadows of Dan Facebook page for a full list of times and events.

Golf Tournament proceeds to benefit Community Kitchen Project

Registration is open for the Reynolds Homestead 3rd annual golf tournament.

The event will be held on Saturday, September 28 at Gordon Trent Golf Course, 2160 Golf Course Road in Stuart, Virginia.

The tournament is one of the Reynolds Homestead’s primary fundraisers, and this year’s proceeds will support the kitchen expansion project. The Reynolds Homestead is developing plans for a community kitchen which will be connected to the Community Engagement Center. The kitchen will offer culinary classes taught by Patrick & Henry Community College and area chefs and will serve as a business incubator for those interested in developing a food-based business.

The Captain’s Choice team tournament fees are \$50 per person. Individual golfers and twosomes will



Golfers at the 2023 tournament. (Photo by Julie Walters Steele)

be grouped into four person teams. The tournament includes a 50/50 raffle and a raffle for prizes provided by area businesses and supporters. A BBQ lunch of pulled pork or chicken, buns, baked beans, slaw and chips will be served to all golfers. Guests may join the barbeque lunch for \$15 per person.

The Reynolds Homestead would like to thank Dewey Hinnant, man-



A rendering of the Community Kitchen at Reynolds Homestead, provided by Dewberry.

ager of Gordon Trent Golf Course for his assistance with organization of the tournament. Golfers can register to participate by contacting Dewey at (276) 694-3805.

Scott Martin and other friends of the Reynolds Homestead for their assistance with the tournament, sponsorships, prizes and BBQ meal also are appreciated.

Sponsors are being sought for the tournament. Sponsorship for tees or holes is \$100 each. Call Martin at (276) 732-6950 or Julie Walters Steele at (276) 694-7181 ext. 23, if interested in sponsorships, registering a team, or providing a prize for the raffle.

The rain date is Saturday, October 5.

Tourism office wins two awards at summit, OFP honored as 'Tourism Partner'



The Patrick County Tourism Department won two awards - Excellence in Tourism Marketing Collateral awards for the Best New Website (Tourism Marketing Budget—\$50,000 or more) and Best Magazine Guide for the 2023 Fall Magazine - on Aug. 6, during the 5th annual Celebrate Tourism Summit.

"I am excited about the awards. They show the team's hard work and dedication to showcasing our amazing stories, people, and an outstanding community," said James Houchins, director of Economic Development and Tourism.

He was among the more than 200 tourism professionals gathered for the summit, which was held at the Wytheville Meeting Center, presented by Visit Wytheville, Virginia Tourism Corporation, and Friends of Southwest Virginia.

During the event, Friends of Southwest Virginia hosted the Southwest Virginia Tourism Awards Ceremony to honor the exceptional work in the region's tourism industry. Awards were

presented in various categories, recognizing the remarkable contributions to tourism marketing, visitor services, events, and leadership. These awards were open to tourism organizations, individuals in tourism and economic development, and tourism-related businesses within the 19 counties of the Southwest Virginia region.

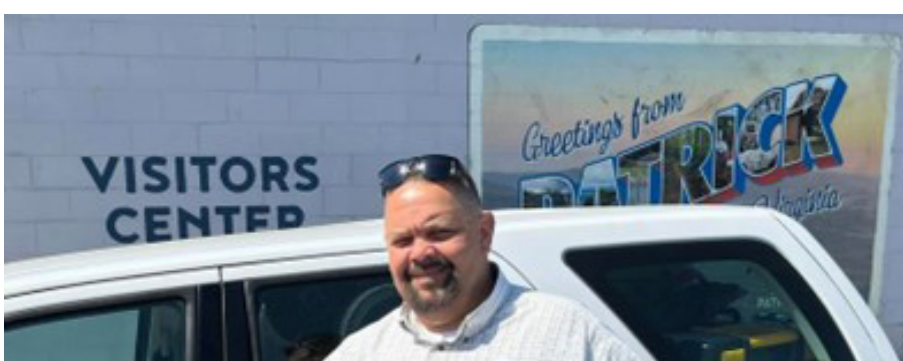
Many projects, like the county's magazine "are produced in partnership with the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce," Houchins said, adding that Rebecca Adcock, the chamber's executive director, "is one of the driving forces behind the magazine. She coordinates the ads and works seamlessly with David Stanley of Silverlining Designs. The efforts of Kim Rakes, Grace Cooper, and our entire team are what make a winning product.

"I hope the county sees the work of our fine staff and knows that we have something great here, and we love to show it off," Houchins said. "In addition to our awards, I was thrilled to see

the Outstanding Tourism Partner of the Year award go to One Family Productions. Chris (Prutting), Sarah (Wray), and the group have consistently put on top-quality events that drive tourism for the county, a well-deserved award."

"Celebrating the contributions and accomplishments of our tourism partners is vital," said Kim Davis, Executive Director of Friends of Southwest Virginia. "Tourism is a key economic driver in Southwest Virginia, and we're thrilled to acknowledge these outstanding leaders who tirelessly showcase and market our region to travelers."

Southwest Virginia tourism professionals submitted over 65 nominations. Winners were selected by a panel of tourism industry professionals from across the Southeastern United States and one judge from England, who carefully reviewed and judged each entry. A complete listing of all of the winners throughout the region can be found at <https://friendsofswva.org/>.



Tourism Talks

Hello Patrick, I hope you have enjoyed the last few weeks. This has been a busy time for the Tourism office. Our team has been promoting the county, and we are truly happy to participate in the many community events. I often mention that we want to hear from you about what you may be having, and I will ask again that you send us your schedules.

Our Chamber of Commerce is hosting a casual get-together with local businesses and groups to start working on calendars for the upcoming holiday season. This is a great opportunity for you to get the word out so we can list all the great things happening. I am thankful for Rebecca Adcock's work with the chamber and her partnership with tourism. The meeting is conveniently scheduled for August 19 at the P&HCC Stuart Location, a time and place that should fit well into your schedule. It will be from 8 to 10 a.m. Stop by and get that first cup of coffee and pastry she will have for you. The event is free. However, she would like for you to RSVP at <https://bit.ly/PCXMasplanning>. Check out the chamber's website for more info.

I also want to remind everyone that the Kibler Valley River Run has been rescheduled for this Saturday. The Red Bank Ruritans have

done an amazing job putting this on. "Weather," (I thought I would get away this time without mentioning it again); however, "weather" and an electrical issue caused them to postpone it from the original date.

The Meadows of Dan Folk Festival is also this Saturday. This exciting event will consume the Meadows Dan Community with multiple vendors, music, and fun for the entire family. Make your way up there and see how they transform our "gateway community" to the beautiful Blue Ridge Parkway into an oasis of fellowship.

Finally, I want to thank our entire staff, the Chamber of Commerce, Silverlining Designs, and our photographers and writers for the great work they have been doing over the last several years. We won two tourism awards at the Tourism Summit the Friends of Southwest Virginia hosted early last week. One of our community partners, One Family Productions, won "Outstanding Tourism Partner of the Year" nominated by the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce. This group is one of the gems we have in this community and a much-deserved award!

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

Farmers markets support small vendors, provide food security



By Will Walkey
Virginia News Connection

This week is National Farmers Market Week, and Virginia's agricultural community is using that platform to promote food security and the other benefits that your local farmers market provides. Thousands of vendors sell produce, crafts and other products at markets across the Commonwealth.

Jess McClelland, communications coordinator with the nonprofit Virginia Fresh Match, said when you buy direct from local businesses rather than big box stores, that's putting more money into your neighbors' pockets.

"During a time when farmers are facing increasing economic challenges, shopping local at farmers markets is one of the best ways that people can ensure that farmers can make a living and continue providing their communities with access to fresh food and also support farmland preservation," McClelland said.

Many markets also accept gov-

ernment assistance benefits, including SNAP (food stamps) and SUN Bucks, which can be used through Virginia Fresh Match. Agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry, yet more than 700,000 residents in the Commonwealth are considered food insecure.

Jenny Lester Moffitt, U.S. Department of Agriculture Undersecretary, said farmers markets can fill gaps in food deserts where healthy fruits and vegetables are expensive or hard to find.

"It's about selling food, but it's also about that nutrition education, and it's also about farmer and farming education too, where you get to talk with the farmer who's growing your product," she said.

Many products are in season across the Commonwealth now, including tomatoes, peaches, peppers and cherries. More information about your local market, such as hours of operation and wheelchair or pet accessibility, is available at vafma.org.

Pets of the Week



The cutie on the left, who we've named Bear, is just 9 months old. Look at those big floppy ears. He is a big boy and is neutered ready for his new home NOW.

This good looking guy is confused and doesn't know why he is here. He would love to find a home real soon.

Come see these two and the many other nice dogs that don't belong here. Adoption fees are only \$10 and include spay/neuter and a rabies vaccination. Visit the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter's (PCPAS) Facebook page to view available pets or call (276) 694-6259 for more information.

VISIT US ONLINE
WWW.THEENTERPRISE.NET

Marriage Licenses

Marriage Licenses issued in July:
Breezy R. Barganski - Cody R. Butcher
Cody Rabon - Dena Hall
Tyler Belcher - Kayla L. Nowlin

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276-638-2778

Former Trump Security

(cont. from page 1)

ration, Deck said, adding that he believes the lack of interagency communication was detrimental to security efforts in Butler.

“Being able to talk back and forth to those parties involved” is imperative, he said, and explained that like many agencies, his group operated on a closed communications network. To get around that problem, “we had a couple of handy talkies. I would throw one to the head guy with the local cops, and we had one, so if something happened, we could talk to them, and they could talk to us,” he said.

Also, when his company provided venue security, “I only did this with six or eight guys,” Deck said. “I wasn’t Secret Service, so I had to depend on the local police – city, county and state, because I did not have the support or structure the Secret Service has. I did all of the advance. I met with the police chief, state police, county police. I did all of that stuff.”

In comparison, the Secret Service’s advance team includes “a lead guy and 19 other Secret Service agents,” Deck said, adding that number swells to 30 or more agents on the day of the event.

Additionally, Deck and his team did not have magnetometers to screen for weapons, but relied on other available tools, like K-9 officers.

“The liaison with the local (law enforcement agencies) would take dogs to the arenas early in the morning” to check for anything untoward, Deck said, adding that he not only worked with local and state law enforcement agencies, but met with the SWAT team leaders and others to ensure the events were held without incident.

“I relied on local law enforcement. I had a lot of law enforcement that helped out,” he said. Tactical meetings were held to identify weak areas and potential threats. Then, the agencies involved worked to mitigate potential incidents in advance.

“You have to have a plan, and when you’re going over that plan, you’ve got to have a contingency plan” or two, Deck said. Flexibility also is important - whether it is a few days or a few hours from a scheduled event. “We did about five or six venues that were

similar to the way the venue was set up in Butler,” he added, and recounted two of those experiences.

The first was an August 2015 rally in Laredo, TX, in which Trump was to lay out his border policy and receive an important endorsement, Deck said.

In Laredo, “I met with the police chief, the Texas Rangers, all of that,” in advance of Trump’s “big press conference on the border,” Deck said. The police chief there went with Deck to survey the venue site, which was on the Rio Grande River, in a historical area that included a large archway that Trump was to stand under while delivering his remarks.

The day before the event, “it was all set. We had everything set. It was locked down and we were done,” Deck said. But that all changed at 4 a.m. the next morning, when he received the unexpected news that one of the scheduled speakers had received death threats.

Concern for that person’s safety, the potential impact to Trump and the safety of those attending the rally prompted Deck to change its location, within hours of Trump’s scheduled 1 p.m. arrival.

Deck said he was waiting at the local police department when the chief arrived that morning to bring the police chief up to speed, and request more help or “assets.”

Deck said the chief suggested another site, and described it as “a perfect place to hold it. In the middle of nowhere,” and within an estimated 20-minute drive. “It was a desolate area. There was actually a truck crossing for trucks that go back and forth across the border from Mexico, but there was not a building around.”

The site would accommodate sniper teams, and “the chief had a very good relationship with the Mexican Marine Corps, and he let them know what was going on. Believe it or not, they actually located a sniper team from across the river. The Mexican Marine Corps guarded that side” of the river, Deck said. The chief also provided additional support with 25 to 30 motorcycle officers, cars and other resources.



Eddie Deck Jr. (Contributed by Ray Reynolds)

The venue was successfully changed at the last minute, and Deck made it to the airport in time to meet Trump’s plane with little time to spare. Later, the event went off without a hitch.

“We had no issues, no problems,” Deck said. “That was an example of the strategy that ‘the show must go on.’ And it got on. We moved the venue.”

He recalled that another event, scheduled to be held at an indoor arena in Chicago, was canceled due to security concerns, and “the reasons for doing it were totally legit. On the day of the event, I got there early,” Deck said, and explained that attendees often begin arriving at event venues long before Trump was scheduled to speak – sometimes as early as 1 p.m. for a 6 p.m. event.

“As the arena started to fill up, I saw what I knew were pockets of troublemakers” in the crowd, Deck said. “About two-hours before the boss (Trump) was scheduled to speak, I ended up calling the campaign to tell them ... there were a lot of bad actors.”

He was instructed to check back in an hour, and when he made that call, Deck said he told the campaign lead that, “if it was me, I wouldn’t even bring him (Trump) over. Not only would I worry about his safety, but the safety of all of the people at the



Ray Reynolds, of Collinsville, is pictured with Eddie Deck Jr. “I first met Eddie in 2015, when I was covering Trump rallies,” said Reynolds, a Collinsville resident and photojournalist who has attended a total of 85 Trump events and written books about his experiences. (Contributed by Ray Reynolds)

rally.” The campaign pivoted, and released a statement citing unforeseen circumstances, effectively canceling the event, Deck said, and explained “that was an instance of ‘why chance it.’”

He added that Trump “was doing rallies all the time then, and he could make it up the next day, so why even chance this one?”

With respect to Butler, and based on his experience, testimony to congress and news reports, Deck believes “there was one shooter. There is no conspiracy. There is no inside job.”

Although Ronald Rowe, interim director of the Secret Service, recently said the incident represented a failure on the part of the agency, Deck gave Secret Service agents high marks for their response in Butler.

“Their job is to protect the principal – in this case, Trump,” Deck said. “When the president was hit and went down, they were on him in three seconds. They did a great job. That Secret Service sniper also did a great job. One shot.”

Get Up, Stand Up - Stand Up For Your Circulation

Like many people, my job requires me to sit. And sit. And sit. Oh, and stare at a computer screen, too. Sometimes, I find myself emotionally drained because of the lack of movement and circulation.

Keeping a healthy circulation doesn’t only improve your emotional health, it also keeps your immune response active. Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) delves into the mind-body interventions that keep us healthy and happy. It examines how the quality of life is improved by mind-body interactions. Physical interventions are considered alternative medicine or integrative therapies.

Physical interventions

Physical interventions encompass the movement of the body. Body movement has many physical and immunological benefits. Body movement increases circulation, heart rate, strengthens muscles, aids in relaxation, and releases biochemical mediators or endorphins. Dopamine and serotonin are the happy hormones that can be created with good circulation.

Physical activity is another outlet

for us to release internalized stress. A clinical example of physical interventions being successful was seen in the treatment of cancer patients. According to the research, cancer patients who were physically active had more energy and less distressing symptoms than those who lacked physical activity. It doesn’t have to be intense exercise; walking is actually one of the very best ways to maintain healthy bodily circulation. Stretching is another effective way to keep your body toned and healthy.

One final way to achieve physical activity and proper circulation is progressive muscle relaxation. This technique is helpful for suppressing anxiety. It involves systematically tensing and relaxing muscle groups – even just clenching and unclenching your fists. Even though PNI is a growing framework, it still supports the use of many integrative therapies for cancer patients as seen through physical interventions.

Dr. Axe shares ten stretches for people like me (and you, too, since you’re probably reading this from a computer screen). They’re lifesavers, serious-

ly. I urge you to do them every single day you’re confined to your office desk.

Stretch at Your Desk

These 10 stretches you can do at your desk will keep you bendy and feeling good. Like yoga ... at your desk

Rubber Neck – Sit up tall and drop your right ear down towards your right shoulder (you don’t have to touch it!) and hold for a few seconds and repeat for the left side.

Reach for the Stars – Interlace your fingers and reach up towards the sky, as high as you can ... keeping your palms facing up towards the ceiling.

Look Around – Turn your head the left and try and look over your shoulder and hold for a few seconds ... repeat on the right.

Bobblehead – Drop your chin down towards your chest and GENTLY roll your head from side to side.

Shrugs – Raise both shoulders up towards your ears and hold for a few seconds and release. Repeat a few times for good measure.

Chest Opener – Bring your hands behind your back, press your palms together, sit up tall and hold for 5–10 seconds.

Seated Toy Soldier – Sit up tall and extend your right arm all the way up towards the ceiling. Straighten your left leg out and raise it up as you bring your right arm down and try to touch your left foot. Do 8–10 on each side.

Knee Hugger – With a bent knee, lift your right leg up and grab it with your arms and pull it in as close to your chest as you can. Hold for 5–10 seconds and make sure and do it on the left side, too.

Reach and Bend – Extend your right arm over your head and reach out as far as you can to the left and gently bend over. Hold for a few seconds and do it the other way.

Knee Press – This one stretches out the glutes. With your right ankle on your left knee, gently press against the right knee a few times. Of course, after you’re done with the right side, be sure and give the left side some love, too.

(Submitted by Betty Dean. Written by Raeann Leal, MPH. Used by permission from www.lifeandhealth.org Courtesy of LifeSpring – Resources for Hope and Healing Stuart, VA)

Updates to Farm Loan Programs go into effect in Sept.

Changes to the Farm Service Agency’s (FSA) Farm Loan Programs, effective Sept. 25, are intended to increase opportunities for farmers and ranchers to be financially viable, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) which announced the changes last week.

These improvements, part of the Enhancing Program Access and Delivery for Farm Loans rule, demonstrate USDA’s commitment to improving farm profitability through farm loans designed to provide important financing options used by producers to cover operating expenses and purchase land and equipment.

Farm loan policy changes outlined in the Enhancing Program Access and Delivery for Farm Loans rule, are designed to better assist borrowers to make strategic

investments in the enhancement or expansion of their agricultural operations.

The three most notable policy changes include:

*Establishing a new low-interest installment set-aside program for financially distressed borrowers. *Eligible financially distressed borrowers can defer up to one annual loan installment per qualified loan at a reduced interest rate, providing a simpler and expedited option to resolve financial distress in addition to FSA’s existing loan servicing programs.

*Providing all eligible loan applicants access to flexible repayment terms that can increase profitability and help build working capital reserves and savings. By creating upfront positive cash flow, borrowers can find opportunities in their farm operating plan budgets to in-

clude a reasonable margin for increased working capital reserves and savings, including for retirement and education.

*Reducing additional loan security requirements to enable borrowers to leverage equity. This reduces the amount of additional security required for direct farm loans, including reducing the frequency borrowers must use their personal residence as additional collateral for a farm loan.

The FSA has a significant initiative underway to streamline and automate the Farm Loan Program customer-facing business process. For the over 26,000 producers who submit a direct loan application annually, FSA has made several impactful improvements including:

The Loan Assistance Tool provides customers with an interactive online, step-by-step guide to

identifying the direct loan products that may be a fit for their business needs and to understanding the application process.

The Online Loan Application, an interactive, guided application that is paperless and provides helpful features including an electronic signature option, the ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns, complete a balance sheet, and build a farm operating plan.

An online direct loan repayment feature that relieves borrowers from the necessity of calling, mailing, or visiting a local USDA Service Center to pay a loan installment.

A simplified direct loan paper application, reduced from 29 pages to 13 pages.

For more information, visit, www.fsa.usda.gov.

Educator Expense Deduction

Some of my best legislative ideas come from people around the district.

I regularly attend public events to make myself accessible so you can share your thoughts and concerns.

Among my stops this summer was the New River Valley Fair in Dublin.

I got to call some bingo and speak with fairgoers. One local public school teacher expressed concern to me about paying out-of-pocket for school supplies. The teacher is Elisa Grantham. She felt the current \$300 tax credit was insufficient.

My recollection is she said the current deduction is “doodly-squat.” Whether that’s the wording she used or not, she clearly felt the deduction failed the reality in the classroom.

The National Education Association website reports that studies show educators spend on average somewhere between \$500 and \$750 of their own money every year on things students need. This article from last year was based on studies conducted in the years prior to that.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, ninety-four percent of teachers reach into their wallets to buy classroom supplies.

The Educator Expense Deduction was first enacted in 2002. Eligible educators for the federal tax credit include K-12 teachers, instructors, counselors, principals or aides who work for at least 900 hours a school year in a school that provides elementary or secondary education as determined under state law.

This deduction was unfortunately not around when my mother and her co-teacher, Ms. Clara Winkler, taught sixth grade for Roanoke County schools at Broad Street Elementary. I remember their dedication as they made sure to purchase enough supplies and materials for their classroom in order to enhance the educational experience of their students.

While the classroom expense tax deduction used to cover \$250, adjustments increased it to \$300 in 2022.

But per the statistics above, \$300 falls far short of what educators typically spend on a yearly basis to meet student and classroom needs.

This is likely further exacerbated by Biden-Harris era inflation. Many teachers are having to make difficult financial decisions on top of spending money for their classrooms.

The Los Angeles Times found that between August 2022 and June 2023, the prices for writing tools and supplies, including crayons, highlighters, pens and pencils, have increased an average of 18.5 percent.

As an example, the cost of plan-



Morgan Griffith

Representative

ners, binders and folders surged an average of a 48.5 percent increase in cost during that time, and the increase in the price of “paper and forms” was eighty percent!

Given these struggles under the Biden-Harris economy, like others, educators are in a pinch.

Following my interactions with Grantham at the New River Valley Fair, I introduced legislation to provide educators breathing room and increase the Educator Expense Deduction to \$1,000.

Students and educators will reap the benefits of greater access to classroom resources, particularly those in distressed and underserved communities.

A significant tax achievement was passed by a Republican House, a Republican Senate, and President Donald Trump. The bill became known as the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Individual income tax rates were cut, and the standard deduction was increased.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act helped families! The Child Tax Credit almost doubled. The maximum per-child credit amount went from roughly \$1,000 to \$2,000.

Families also benefitted from the tax bill because it facilitated school choice. Families could use 529 college savings plans for elementary and secondary education expenses.

Many of the provisions in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act are set to expire in 2025. As inflation hinders the ability of many to make a decent living, the expiration of these tax cuts will further hurt American families and consumers.

Americans work hard at their jobs. It is only fair for their paychecks to reflect that.

I will continue to speak with folks on the ground and get their ideas as to what we can do better.

As the school year begins for many in the Ninth District, I would like to thank every educator for your contributions, the dedication to your students, and your care for their education.

Teachers care for their students, whether it was in the second half of the twentieth century like my mother, or like today, the teacher at the Dublin fair. The least we can do is to help them.

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

Letters to the Editor

Biden plays God

(References: Fox, Huckabee, Todd Starnes, Bible NKJV, Daily Signal)

Just so you won't forget where President Biden and Kamala Harris administration stood on the government endorsing doctors playing God and giving puberty-blocking hormones and irreversible surgery to gender-confused adolescents, they made it clear that they are all in for that entire smorgasbord of child abuse.

The administration released a series of documents encouraging gender-reassignment surgery and hormone treatments for minors.

The documents describe what it calls appropriate treatments for transgender adolescents, including: “Top’ surgery – to create male-typical chest shape or enhance breasts;” and “Bottom’ surgery – surgery on genitals or reproductive organs, facial feminization or other procedures.”

The administration said transgender individuals are “made in the image of God” and instructed parents to affirm kids who might be confused about their gender. I guess they forgot about Genesis 1:27: “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them.”

There is no doubt that the administration is doing everything within his power to marginalize conservative Christians. It is not a new ambition, but it certainly

has renewed energy, fueled by the LGBTQ revolution.

The LGBTQ movement is demanding that Christians abandon Biblical Christianity, suggesting that we are the ones who are the agents of conflict if we will not go along with their revolution.

The Bible clearly tells us that homosexuality is a sin and those participating in it will never inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9).

As a senator in the 1990s, Biden was one of 32 Senate Democrats who voted to impose a federal ban on same-sex marriage. He also voted for the legislation that imposed the military's since-repealed “Don't ask, don't tell” policy and for a 1994 amendment to ban schools from using federal funds “for the promotion of homosexuality as a positive lifestyle alternative. As vice president, Biden in 2012 said he was “absolutely comfortable” with same-sex marriage.

The consciences of today's Christians are being corrupted by the oppressive cultural milieu and the extreme social pressure surrounding the issue of homosexuality. 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

Baker will attend annual event

You are invited to our Annual Mixer at the Hooker Building on Thursday evening, August 22, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. If you are tired of the doom and gloom and hate and revenge and believe that we can all be good neighbors again, then come out and meet and visit with like-minded folks.

There is a new face (or newly public) face in our district. Karen Baker, of Floyd, was a federal lawyer and judge. She worked for employment opportunity fairness and Social Security Disability claimants. She retired after 30 years of government service, but found she couldn't sit still in retirement, so she went to nursing school to become a Registered Nurse and worked in a rural hospital. Karen understands how the federal government works, and she understands rural healthcare. Karen wants to be our Congresswoman in the US House of Representatives as a Democrat.

It seems there have been more good things happening lately in rural Virginia to make everyone's lives better. State and local initiatives to attract better jobs and support housing availability or provide new educational opportunities at our excellent Community

Colleges – it is all filling me with pride and hope.

But some of our challenges are big, and big challenges need big help. It took help from the federal government to bring electricity to rural America; private businesses alone were not willing or able to electrify our entire country. That is worth remembering when you flip that light switch. Unfortunately, our representation in Congress has seemed unable to say ‘Yes’ to making life better for rural Virginians. How, exactly, are affordable insulin and lower medicine costs for our seniors bad ideas? Karen Baker has spent her life in service to others, helping and healing people. She wants to work in Congress to ensure our federal government is always thinking of rural Virginia, using our tax dollars wisely to move our communities forward.

Karen will be at our Mixer. She wants to listen to you to understand what you need to improve the lives of your families. I haven't seen anyone come away from a conversation with Karen without a smile on their face and hope in their heart. The time for joy and growth is now. You are invited.

Oscar Joost,
Dry Pond/Five Forks

Health district receives national award

The West Piedmont Health District (WPHD) is among 14 local health departments across the nation, and the only one in Virginia, to be recognized for a Model Practice, by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

Model Practices are programs demonstrating exemplary and replicable qualities in response to a critical local public health need. WPHD's initiative, Community Health Workers as Data Collectors Provides Equity in Rural Virginia, garnered the award during the NACCHO annual conference in Detroit on July 25.

Community health workers collected data throughout the health district (City of Martinsville and the counties of Henry,

Franklin, and Patrick) by conducting surveys and using tablets to record responses. Because they are trusted members of the communities they serve, community health workers provide important health and wellness outreach. The information they collected was vital for broad and equitable representation in the content of the Martinsville Henry County Community Health Equity Assessment in 2023.

Winning projects are determined through a competitive, peer-reviewed process and will be added to NACCHO's Model Practice searchable online database where other local health departments can review these best practices and adopt them for use in their community.

“This award would not have been possible without the continued partnerships West Piedmont Health District has with its community partners, including FQHCs (Federally Qualified Health Centers), nonprofits and state-local government,” said Pamela Chitwood, Health Equity Specialist/Population Health Community Coordinator at WPHD. “This year's awardees have demonstrated exceptional

service in developing programs to address substance use, health inequities, infant and child health, health literacy, immunization, foodborne illnesses, hepatitis, and other pressing health challenges in their regions. This recognition is sure to inspire continued excellence and progress in public health practices across the country,” said Lori Tremmel Freeman, NACCHO CEO.

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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.

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Patrick Pioneers

Joel G. Williams, Sparrell D. Williams, & Leonard E. Williams

By Beverly Belcher Woody

I appreciate it when folks recommend people to research for the Patrick Pioneers column. Recently, Michael Belcher suggested that I do a story on Joel Gardner Williams and shortly after that, I was pleased to talk with Onie Vaughn about her brother, Sparrell Dillard Williams. Along with Leonard Elwood Williams, I knew these two Williams men from Patrick County were lost to WWII. I had to wonder if and how they were all related.

We will start with their familial connections and then share their tragic stories. Joel Gardner Williams was born in Meadows of Dan, Virginia on the 27th of August 1921. Joel was the son of Joel P. and Berta Gardner Williams, the grandson of Bill and Lucy Cock Williams, the great-grandson of Jacob and Lucinda Handy Williams, and the 2x great grandson of original settlers to Patrick County, John B. and Sally Helms Williams. Joel had four sisters, Mayetta, Mary Gene, Cora Grace Foley, and Lucy Elizabeth Smith.

Sparrell Dillard Williams was born on April 9th, 1922, in Premier, West Virginia to Benjamin and Annie Delilah Hall Williams. Sparrell was the grandson of Charlie and Luella Light Williams, the great-grandson of John Preston Williams, Sr. and his first wife Lucinda Roberson Williams, the 2x great grandson of Elder Sparrell Dickerson and Onie Branch Williams, and the 3x great grandson of settlers John B. and Sally Helms Williams.

Sparrell was the oldest child of Benjamin and Annie Hall Williams, followed by Mildred Pauline, Vera Onie, Betty Jean, Nettie Edna, Lucy Elva, Charlie Dodd, and Joyce Marie Williams. Their father, Benjamin, had contracted black lung from working in the coal mines in West Virginia, so after Mildred Pauline was born, the family returned home to the Dobyns community where the remaining children were born.

Leonard Elwood Williams was born to Louis Gravely "Doc" and Hattie Jane Martin Williams on the third of January 1922. Leonard was the grandson of John Preston Williams, Sr. and his third wife, Mittie Teco Gilbert Williams, the great-grandson of Elder Sparrell and Onie Branch Williams, and the 2x great grandson of Patrick County settlers, John B. and Sally Helms Williams. So, we now have a connection between the three young men.

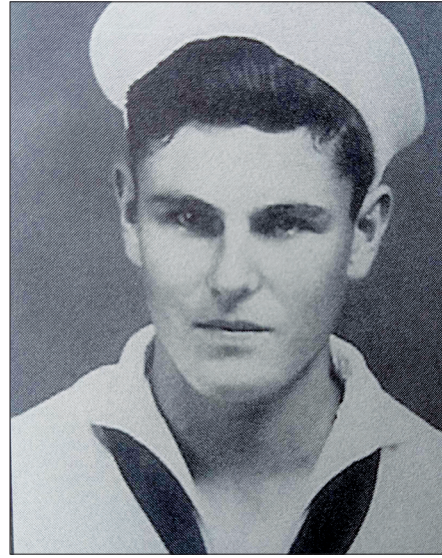
Leonard was the middle child born to his parents: his two older brothers were Gilbert T. and Francis L. Williams, and his two younger brothers were Marshall and Lloyd G. Williams. Francis L. Williams also served in the US Army during WWII with Unit 310th Medical Battalion, Company C.; he enlisted on the 24th of July 1942 and was discharged on the 28th of December 1944. Tragically, Francis was hit by a car and killed on the 19th of August 1945.

According to writings from Joel Gardner William's sister, the late Cora Grace Foley, Joel joined the United States Air Force in October of 1942 and at the time of his death, had achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant. Joel served on a B-24 Liberator bomber nicknamed "Ready, Willing and Able," which disappeared in a thunderstorm March 5, 1944, over Papua New Guinea. The bomber had taken off with a squadron at 11:17 p.m. from Nadzab, Papua New Guinea, on its' 12th mission to bomb Japanese targets in the Hansa Bay area of Papua New Guinea. No one heard from "Ready, Willing and Able" again. The aircraft and crew disappeared in heavy thunderstorms, no radio transmissions were ever received, and subsequent searches did not locate them.

According to the Arlington Cemetery website, U.S. Army grave registration teams conducted wide searches in New Guinea without success. Forty-three years later, European tourists hiking over a mountain range in the Madang province of New Guinea saw the tail of an old bomber sticking up in the brush. The tail number was that of "Ready, Willing and Able." Although officials were certain the bomber's tail was that of the missing aircraft, the Army waited until it was certain the remains of all the crewmembers were in the wreckage.

On December 7, 2001, the 10-man crew of the "Ready, Willing, and Able" bomber were laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. The remains of SSGT Joel Gardner Williams and the other Army Air Corps soldiers of his crew were interred together in one casket and buried at Section 60: Site 8017. Joel was twenty-two years old.

Onie Vaughn shared the following information about her oldest brother, "Private First-Class Sparrell Dillard Williams was inducted on December 16th, 1942, into the Third Armored Division. He earned the Normandy Campaign Battle Star, Purple Heart, Service Lapel Button, Victory Medal, European



Leonard E. Williams (Photo from Ella Hall)

African Middle Eastern Campaign with two Bronze Service Stars, Expert Rifleman, Good Conduct Medal, and American Campaign Medal."

Onie remembers well the day her family received the notification that the older brother she adored had been seriously wounded in the Normandy Invasion. Onie said that she and her siblings were helping her parents who were cutting the tops out of their corn crop when a man brought a telegram. Thirteen-year-old Onie recalls her mother reading the telegram and falling to the ground in anguish; she also remembers after receiving the news, her mother's hair turned white overnight. The telegram stated that Sparrell had been shot through his shoulder and the shrapnel had entered his lungs.

Onie said that Sparrell spent months in the Veteran's Hospital in Oteen, North Carolina and the family tried to visit him as often as possible. Although Sparrell was honorably discharged on August 18th, 1945, and was alive when the Japanese surrendered, the war killed him just the same.

Sparrell had married Betty Gilbert, the daughter of Mallie and Bessie Dalton Gilbert of the Wayside Community, on the 2nd of March 1945. Sparrell and Betty were blessed with the birth of a little boy, John Dillard Williams, on the 31st of March 1946.

Less than three months later, Sparrell went into the hospital for the last time; spending from June 20th, 1946, until his passing over five months later on December 1st, 1946, at the Oteen Veteran's Hospital. Sparrell was twenty-four years old. It would seem things could not get any worse, but they did. Sparrell and Betty's little boy, John Dillard was diagnosed with acute lymphatic leukemia at eight months old (around the same time his father Sparrell passed) and died two months later on February 9th, 1947.



Front Row, L to R:
S/Sgt. Salvatore J. Elhai, Radioman - N.Y.
Sgt. Anthony G. Seaccia, Assist. Engineer - La.
S/Sgt. Joel G. Williams, Engineer - Va.
Sgt. Gilbert F. Smith, Gunner - Ill.
S/Sgt. Arthur J. Swartz, Tail Gunner - Ill.
Sgt. William E. Van Camp, Assist. Radio - Ind.
Back Row L to R:
Lt. Edward M. Sparks, Co-Pilot - Ks.
Lt. Raymond E. Drewelow, Pilot - Iowa
Lt. James H. Nelson, Navigator - La.
Lt. George R. Ellison, Bomberier, Va.

90th B.G. 319th Sqd. Lost on a mission to Hansa Bay.

Joel Gardner Williams and his fellow crewmen.



Sparrell D. Williams (Photo from Onie Vaughn)

Leonard Elwood Williams was a Coxswain in the United States Navy. There were a few service records for Leonard: on the 31st of December 1942, he was listed on the muster roll for the US Naval Air Station at Jacksonville, Florida; on the 20th of June 1944, he was at the amphibious training base at Fort Pierce, Florida, called the "11th Beach Battalion"; on the 13th of December 1944, he was on the muster roll for the USS Henrico and was departing from Boston, Massachusetts to "the sea." On the 19th of March 1945, he was on a Landing Ship Tank (LST 946) departing from the Leyte Gulf to "secret orders." Leonard was killed in action seven days later on Okinawa Island on March 26th, 1945. According to his cousin, Ella Hall, Leonard's mother received a letter from Leonard's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Joseph B. McCabe, praising Leonard and lamenting his death. Leonard was twenty-three years old.

Thank you so much to Onie Williams Vaughn, Michael Belcher, Ella Hall, and the late Cora Grace Foley for information on these brave, young, Patrick County heroes. Woody may be reached at rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com or (276) 692-9626.

Social Security Matters

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

Ask Rusty - Will My Wife Get a Spousal Benefit from Me?

Dear Rusty: I will be turning 70 (yikes) this coming November. I will begin taking my Social Security benefit at that time. My age 70 SS benefit will be approximately \$4,500 per month. My spouse (who is currently 74) began receiving her SS benefits about 10 years ago - before her FRA. She receives approximately \$1,900 per month.

My question is, based on my expected SS monthly benefit of approximately \$4,500, would my spouse be eligible for an increase in her monthly SS benefit? I've read some articles

about this topic, but none of them seem to be on point - so I thought I'd reach out to you. Signed: Seeking Answers

Dear Seeking: Congratulations on choosing a claiming strategy which will maximize your Social Security. Waiting until age 70 to claim guarantees you will get the most you can personally receive for the rest of your life, along with annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA). But the spouse benefits available to your wife when you claim are not based on your age 70 amount. Rather, spouse benefits are calculated using full retirement age (FRA) amounts. Here's what that means:

If your age 70 benefit will be about \$4,500 then your FRA amount was likely around \$3,450. If your wife claimed at, say, 64, then her FRA en-

titlement would probably have been around \$2,200. Your wife will only get a spousal boost if 50% of your FRA amount (not your age 70 amount) is more than her own FRA entitlement. From what you've shared, 50% of your FRA amount would be about \$1,750, which is less than your wife's FRA entitlement (and her current age 64 amount), which means that she would not be eligible for a spousal boost to her own amount from you.

Spouse benefits can be tricky, because they're based on FRA entitlements, regardless of the age at which benefits are actually claimed. That is not so, however, for surviving spouse benefits. If you were to predecease your wife, her benefit would be your entire \$4,500 amount, instead of her own smaller current amount. Surviving spouse benefits are based on the

amount each of you are currently receiving, not on your amounts at your full retirement age.

I hope this answers your question, but we're always here if you need any further assistance.

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org.

Uptick in COVID cases reported locally

Health officials reported an uptick of cases of COVID-19, based on visits to emergency departments.

The Centers for Disease & Prevention (CDC) reported that most areas of the country are experiencing consistent increases in COVID-19 activity. COVID-19 test positivity, emergency department visits, and rates of COVID-19-associated hospitalizations remain elevated, particularly among adults 65+. Surges like this are known to occur throughout the year, including during the

summer months. There are many effective tools to prevent spreading COVID-19 or becoming seriously ill.

The increase is no surprise because the new variant, FLiRT, is the most dominant and is responsible for more than 30% of cases in the U.S. In fact, COVID-19 cases in Virginia have more than doubled over the past month, according to recent reports from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).

This variant is highly transmissible compared to other variants,

with symptoms that are consistent with other variants, including sore throat, body aches, cough, runny nose and shortness of breath (especially in unvaccinated people or those infected long ago).

The next booster vaccine should be available between September and October, and it will protect against this strain, according to the CDC, which recommends that everyone 6 months and older get a COVID-19 vaccine.

It is not too late to get vaccinated

if you haven't received a 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine and are at high risk for serious COVID-19. For influenza vaccination, CDC recommends annual vaccination for everyone 6 months or older with rare exceptions. Influenza vaccination in July and August is not recommended for most adults but can be considered for some groups. Vaccination by the end of October is recommended, if possible.

To find pharmacies near you, visit www.vaccines.gov.

Austin Dillon Wins Overtime Thriller at Richmond Raceway

By Holly Cain
NASCAR Wire Service

It took a controversial full-contact finish but Austin Dillon claimed his first NASCAR Cup Series victory in two seasons in Sunday night's Cook Out 400 at Richmond (Va.) Raceway – vaulting from a 32nd place in the points standings before the race to an automatic Playoff berth with the win.

Coming to the checkered flag during the final lap of overtime, Dillon's No. 3 Richard Childress Racing Chevy hit the rear bumper of the race-leading No. 22 Team Penske driven by Joey Logano crashing Logano's car into the catchfence. Then Dillon immediately moved low on track and hit Denny Hamlin's No. 11 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota as he was driving by. It allowed Dillon to take the checkered flag only a few feet ahead and claim the all-important win by a slight .116-second.

As Logano and Hamlin drove their dented, smoking cars to pit lane, the 34-year-old North Carolinian Dillon did victory doughnuts and spoke about the win and the move he used to gain it. He reminded reporters later that this was short track-style racing and that he's seen both Logano and Hamlin make similarly aggressive moves to win a trophy.

"I don't know man, it's been two years and this is the first car I've had a shot to win with," Dillon said when asked if he thought it was a fair move for the win.

"I felt like with two to go, we were the fastest car. Obviously we had to have a straightaway. Wrecked the guy. I hate to do that, but sometimes you just got to do it.

"I got to thank the good Lord above. It's been tough for the last two years man. I care about RCR, these fans, my wife. This is my first [win] for my baby girl. It means a lot. I hate it, but I had to do it."

"When given that shot, you've got to take it," Dillon added.

It's Dillon's first win in the last 68 races and fifth of his career. His last trophy came in the final regular season race of 2022 at Daytona International Speedway which earned a last chance position in that Playoff run. He was ranked 32nd in points coming into this Richmond race – 258 points behind



Austin Dillon, driver of the #3 Bass Pro Shops Chevrolet, celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Cup Series Cook Out 400 at Richmond Raceway on August 11, 2024 in Richmond, Virginia. (Photo by Sean Gardner/Getty Images)

the Playoff cutoff line – and now he becomes the 13th driver to win his way into championship contention.

Noted his grandfather, team owner and NASCAR Hall of Famer, Richard Childress, "He knew what he had to do and they (Logano and Hamlin) would have done it to him."

After speaking briefly with reporters alongside his car on pit road, an angry Logano went immediately to the NASCAR officials team hauler.

"It was chicken & *#! - there's no doubt about it," the two-time series champion Logano said of Dillon's move. "He was four car-lengths back, not even close. Then he wrecks the 11 [Hamlin] to go along with it.

"I mean I get it, bump and run," Logano continued, "I've done that, but he just drove through me, it's ridiculous."

Logano's crew chief Paul Wolfe was frustrated as well.

"It's just a joke to call that racing. ... something like that, that's not racing," Wolfe said. "We all put too much in this ... that's not professional what happened tonight."

Hamlin, who led the most laps (124) on the night, was equally as frustrated.

"There are no penalties for rough driving so it opens up the opportunity for Austin to just do whatever he wants," said Hamlin, who was scored second.

"I got hooked in the right rear again. I was just minding my own business and he hooked me in the

right rear and put me in the fence. I don't know. The record book won't care about what happened, He's going to be credited with a win but obviously he's not going to go far [in the Playoffs] because you got to pay your dues back on stuff like that.

"But it was worth it because he jumped 20 positions in points, I understand that and there's no ill will there, but I just hate that I was a part of it. ... I understand it but I don't agree with it."

Finishing just behind Hamlin were 23XI Racing teammates Tyler Reddick and Bubba Wallace. Trackhouse Racing's Ross Chastain was fifth. These positions were important with only three races remaining now to set the 16-driver Playoff field.

Playoff eligibility changed throughout the race – sometimes dramatically so.

Wallace's top-five run was enough to move him from a seven-point deficit outside the Playoff 16 to just inside the top 16. He has a three-point advantage in that final Playoff position now over both Roush Fenway Keselowski Racing's Chris Buescher, who finished 18th Sunday night, and Chastain.

Martin Truex Jr., who led the championship standings for much of the early season and held a 102-point advantage inside the standings at the Richmond green flag, took a big hit in the points. His No. 19 JGR Toyota had to retire early with engine problems taking a last place finish in Sunday's 37-

car field and now the 2017 series champion holds only a 78-point advantage above the Playoff cutoff – ranked 14th still the highest ranked driver without a win.

Joe Gibbs Racing's Ty Gibbs is 15th with a 19-point cushion above the cutoff line, followed by Wallace, Buescher and Chastain.

Joe Gibbs Racing's Bell, who led 122 laps and won Stage 1 – a series best 10th stage win - finished sixth, followed by Hendrick Motorsports' Kyle Larson, Spire Motorsports' Carson Hocevar, Hendrick's Chase Elliott and Trackhouse Racing's Daniel Suárez rounding out the Richmond top 10.

Larson continues to lead the standings – now with a five-point advantage over Reddick and a six-point lead on his teammate Elliott. Hamlin is fourth, only 21 points back.

Not only was the race noteworthy for its dramatic ending and the shake up in the points standings, it was a test run of the new option tire that allowed teams to have a choice of Goodyear rubber in-race. It certainly created a new element of strategy and suspense.

Suárez who tried the new tires early, for example, made up 15 points and took the lead immediately after his pit stop to change them.

"The Option tire worked exactly as it was intended," said Goodyear's Director of Racing Greg Stucker. "They fired off immediately and were more than a half-second faster than the Prime, which is big on a short track. Also, the Options gave up significantly more than the Primes over a long run, as intended.

"What was really exciting was how different teams used the Option tire at different times to accomplish their own goals," he added.

With all the storylines, dramatic finish, and important new tire element, Reddick offered the understatement of the evening, "Wild way to end the night."

The series moves to the Midwest next week for Sunday's Firekeepers Casino 400 at the two-mile Michigan International Speedway (2:30 p.m. ET, USA Network, MRN, SiriusXM NASCAR Radio). Roush Fenway Keselowski Racing's Buescher is the defending race winner.

Farmers encouraged to prepare now for peak hurricane season

As peak hurricane season approaches, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) encourages farmers to be proactive in their preparations. The Atlantic hurricane season extends from June 1 to Nov. 30, with the peak occurring between mid-August and late October. The powerful winds and flooding rains of hurricanes can be disastrous for agricultural producers. VDACS recommends that farmers take precautions now to help protect their families, livestock, and farm operations.

Tips to Protect You and Your Family

Monitor local weather reports for up-to-the-minute storm information and follow instructions of local and state government officials.

Charge all cell phones and other important electronic devices.

Create an emergency kit with drinking water and food for humans and pets that will last three to four days, medications, emergency numbers, first aid kit, flashlights, batteries, and dust masks.

Make an emergency plan that identifies evacuation routes and a meeting destination for your family in the event you need to evacuate.

Trim or remove damaged trees and limbs close enough to fall on structures.

Secure loose rain gutters and downspouts and clear any clogged areas or debris to prevent water

damage to your property.

Keep alternative power sources, such as a portable generator, outside, at least 20 feet away from the house, and protected from moisture.

Document the condition of your home with photos and video prior to the storm for insurance purposes.

Have contact information for your local emergency manager, sheriff, and animal control office readily available.

Do not drive across any flooded roadway, as it only takes six inches of water to move a vehicle, and roads may be washed out beneath the floodwaters.

If strong winds knock down trees, make farm lanes and houses accessible to delivery vehicles as soon as it is safe to do so.

Livestock Preparedness Tips:

Secure livestock and other animals. If necessary, build berms for them to stand on in low-lying areas that are prone to flooding. Fencing may also be removed to allow animals to move to higher ground during floods or lower ground during high winds.

Mark animals with an identifier so they can be returned if lost. This includes ear tags with the name of the farm and/or phone numbers, paint markings on hooves or coat, or clipped initials in the hair.

Stock up on feed, water and livestock supplies so that you are

self-sustainable for at least three days.

If your operation uses vent fans, water pumps, milking machines, or other critical electrical equipment, purchase a gas-powered generator and plenty of fuel.

Keep multiple forms of identification for all horses and other equines.

Store the record for the microchip number, if present, in an accessible location. VDACS also recommends keeping a second copy of this information with a family member or friend in a distant location but where it will be easily accessible.

Be sure your horse's vaccinations for tetanus and the encephalitis viruses (Eastern Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus) are current.

Coastal residents should consider evacuating horses inland and out of a storm's path. In addition, horse owners should make plans for how they would acquire any special equipment that may be needed to transport horses prior to an emergency event.

Store fertilizers, pesticides, treated seeds, and other such products away from floodwaters and animals.

Inspect all barns, outbuildings, and other structures for broken or weak components and make repairs before the storm arrives. Stock up on nails, screws and plywood to board up windows and nail doors and windows shut.

Crossing the Lines

News snippets from outside the town/county lines...

Solar project causes property owners concern



A solar facility is being built on the former Bassett Country Club property. (By Ray Reynolds)

Clearing of the former Bassett Country Club property has brought attention to a solar farm that will be located across from Stanleytown Elementary School and was approved in 2020.

Many residents living nearby said they are unhappy about the farm, and some said they were never notified about the project.

Donna Jarrett, who lives at the backside of Hillcrest Park, has felt the effects of the farm's construction. "They burned (debris) Sunday, and it was so bad that you couldn't even go outside," Jarrett said. The entire Bassett Forks area is being affected by the plume of smoke. "The smoke is terrible."

She doesn't know whether the project may devalue her property, but Jarrett said that she felt that it wasn't worth it to try and contact anyone about the project.

"We figured once it was set to go, we didn't stand a chance," she said.

Lee Clark, the county's director of planning, zoning, and inspections, said "Henry County does not have anything invested in this or these projects." Because the solar project is privately funded, local tax money will not go toward the project.

The property is owned by the Lester Group Inc., and the energy produced on the site will not contribute to the county or the city, according to county officials.

Apartment owner plans to work with county on issues



Rick Anderson surveyed an apartment complex in his Collinsville neighborhood.

Ken Lazaro, the owner of the Crestview Apartment complex on Halifax Drive in Collinsville, plans to meet with the Henry County Board of Supervisors this month to discuss the issues neighbors are having with his property and its tenants.

During a July 29 interview, Lazaro said the meeting time has not yet been set up.

"Two of the people were in training, out of town, and couldn't make it. So, I would imagine sometime in August. I think" the supervisors said they'd "give me at least three dates," he said.

Several neighborhood residents attended the July 23 board meeting to detail the issues they've encountered with the apartment complex including multiple acts of violence, drug issues, dead bodies, vermin, the apartments' derelict conditions, and numerous others.

One of the residents was Donald Gilbert, who noted these issues have existed for more than 20 years and were presented to the board in

2008.

"It's been 16 years and very little improvements have been done," he said at the meeting.

Lazaro said he's doing what he can to improve the apartment complex, and that he has a building permit to install new decks and siding on the buildings.

Part of the issues stem from the pandemic, he said, and while he doesn't want to shift the blame, Lazaro said the government made it hard for him to take action and fix the issues.

"I had issues during COVID, and people didn't pay their rent, and I couldn't throw anybody out. For months, I could not throw anybody out, and I had a lot of dead-beats move in here. It was like 22 months, the government said you can't throw them out, we don't want people that could be sick on the street or get sick on the streets, so I couldn't throw them out," he said, adding while this was going on, these tenants weren't paying rent.

Back2School event serves more than 2,000 children

Over the last few weeks, several local churches have banded together for the Back2School program, collecting hundreds of backpacks, filling them with supplies, and then distributing them to more than 2,000 children at a multisite event that occurred on August 2-3.

The effort included a 'pack the bus' event, and according to Stevie Byrd, a volunteer, people were "very generous."

Michael Harrison, pastor of Community Fellowship, helps lead the program that he started in 2007, a year after founding the church.

"The first year we served 75 kids with school supplies. The next year, we added backpacks and served 500," Harrison said.

The following year, shoes were added to the offerings, and registration increased to include 1,000 youngsters, which prompted the addition of satellite locations. This year we are at 10 locations in 10 dif-



Martinsville Mayor LC Jones prepares to fill backpacks with school supplies.

ferent states," he said. "The largest event included 18 locations in five different states."

Brewing company wins bronze medal

Scuffle Hill Brewing Company won the Bronze Medal of the Virginia Craft Brewers Cup at the Virginia Craft Brewers Guild Gala. Scuffle Hill's "Major Redd Imperial Red IPA" won third place in the Specialty IPA category on July 22 at the Farm Bureau Center in Doswell.

A record 128 breweries competed in this year's competition, including 20 new participants. Entries were judged on overall impression, aroma, appearance, flavor, and mouthfeel.

Jake Abell, owner and brewmaster of Scuffle Hill Brewing Company, said, "This opportunity allows members to compete, obtain critical feedback from certified judges, and get statewide recognition to help build our brands. This was the first competition we've ever entered, so we're humbled to receive an award."



Jake Abell is pictured with the Bronze Medal recently awarded to Scuffle Hill Brewing Company.

Basketball Clinic is a slam dunk



(Left to right) John Martin, George Bell, Michael Jarrett, and Bill Adkins prepare to start the 6th annual Michael C. Jarrett Basketball Clinic.

The Michael C. Jarrett 6th annual Basketball Clinic on July 29 and 30 attracted several youngsters, organizers said.

Former Globetrotter George Bell helped coach youngsters, and was available for photos. He said he does so because he has a passion for helping kids and speaking out about bullying.

"I do some public speaking with kids about bullying," said Bell, who has worked with Jarrett on anti-bullying events in the area.

"I've been coming here for about three years," Bell said, having helped with several other basketball clinics. He said he continues because he hopes to inspire youngsters.

At 7-feet, 8-inches tall, Bell has been featured on several TV shows, including "American Horror Story."

Two local coaches, John Martin, coach of Bassett High School's Girls Basketball Team, and Bill Adkins, coach of the Carlisle Girls Basketball Team, also participated.

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Social Security Program marks a milestone

In the fabric of society, few programs have woven themselves as deeply into the American culture as Social Security. The economic devastation of the Great Depression further exposed society's vulnerabilities, with millions of older Americans in poverty and many more at risk of financial ruin. In response, the Social Security Act was signed into law to better ensure a measure of income security for older Americans in retirement.

Over the subsequent decades, it has matured into a vital source of guaranteed,

inflation-adjusted income for millions of retirees who pay in and earn their Social Security through payroll taxes they and their employers contribute throughout their working lives. Social Security also enjoys widespread support across all ages and demographic groups.

Currently, nearly 1.6 million Virginians receive Social Security. Most of those age 65 or older count on Social Security as their largest source of income, and about 25% of households rely on Social Security for 90% or more of their income.

With 90% of people saying Social Security is important to their retirement security, it is helpful to understand how it was created and how it has evolved over time.

Here's a timeline of significant events in the history of Social Security:

Aug. 14, 1935: President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law.

Aug. 10, 1939: The program was broadened to include benefits for workers' dependents and survivors.

October 1950: Congress authorized the first cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), an increase of 77 percent.

September 1960: President Eisenhower signed a law amending the disability rules to permit payment of benefits to disabled workers of any age and to their dependents.

June 30, 1961: All workers are now allowed to retire early at age 62, albeit at a reduced Social Security benefit. Previously, benefits could not be claimed until the normal retirement age of 65.

Oct. 30, 1972: President Nixon signed the Social Security Amendments making the cost-of-living adjustment automatic each year.

April 20, 1983: President Ronald Reagan signed into law sweeping changes to Social Security aimed at addressing the imminent Social Security funding gap. These included moving up scheduled increases in the payroll taxes that fund Social Security, gradually raising the normal retirement age to 67, and making 50 percent of Social Security benefits taxable for recipients with incomes above \$25,000 for an individual and \$32,000 for married couples filing jointly.

Aug. 10, 1993: President Bill Clinton signed the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, a large deficit reduction package of tax increases and spending cuts that included a provision raising the share of Social Security benefits subject to income tax from 50 percent to 85 percent for beneficiaries with incomes above \$34,000 (single) or \$44,000 (couple).

May 6, 2024: According to the Social Security Trustees report, Social Security can pay full benefits until 2035. That doesn't mean Social Security payments would end, but they would be funded

only by each year's payroll tax revenue. The Trustees estimate that would cover about 83 percent of scheduled benefit payments.

The history of Social Security is a testament to the promise between the government and its citizens. From its humble beginnings during the Great Depression, Social Security has stood the test of time, having never missed a payment, providing a foundation of retirement security to generations of Americans.

Who Receives Benefits
Retirement benefits: The largest group of beneficiaries in Virginia are its 1,147,511 retired workers, who account for 72.4 percent of all Social Security beneficiaries in the state.

Disability benefits: Virginia has 199,120 residents who receive Social Security disability income, representing 12.6 percent of the state's Social Security beneficiaries.

Spousal and survivor benefits: In Virginia, 144,084 spouses, former spouses, widows, widowers, and parents of deceased beneficiaries account for 9.1 percent of the state's Social Security beneficiaries. An additional 94,479 children, representing 6 percent of the state's Social Security beneficiaries, receive benefits.

Impact
Economic engine. Annual Social Security benefits to Virginians pump at least \$27.6 billion into the state economy, with \$21 billion paid annually to those receiving retirement benefits and their eligible family members, \$3.1 billion via survivor benefits, and an additional \$3.5 billion paid through the disability program. Recipients buy goods and services with their Social Security benefits, increasing business sales—which help the companies making those sales and the firms that supply them. The result is more jobs and income to businesses and workers in Virginia.

Reduced poverty. Social Security lifted 333,000 Virginians 65 or older out of poverty from 2018 through 2020. In fact, 31.8 percent of the state's residents in this age group would be in poverty but for Social Security benefits; that number falls to 7.3 percent when Social Security income is included. Nationally, the program lifted 16.1 million people 65 and older out of poverty, reducing the proportion below the poverty line from 37.8 percent to 9 percent.

Average Benefits
Retirement benefits: The average Social Security retired worker benefit in Virginia is \$1,598 monthly (about \$19,200 annually). The national average monthly retirement benefit is \$1,544.

Disability benefits: In Virginia, the average Social Security disabled worker benefit is \$1,291 per month (about \$15,500 annually). The national average monthly disabled worker benefit is \$1,277.

At least 483,567 Virginia residents, or 36 percent of individuals 65 and older, live in families that rely on the program for at least half of their income.

There are 259,474 Virginia residents, or 19 percent of individuals 65 and older, live in families that rely on the program for at least 90 percent of their income.

Overall, 29 percent of Black Virginia residents 65 and older live in families that rely on Social Security for at least 90 percent of their income as compared with 18 percent of white residents.

For more information about the program, visit <https://www.aarp.org/socialsecurity>.

Freida Fulcher Grogan

Freida Fulcher Grogan passed away peacefully on Thursday, August 1, 2024 in Mesa, AZ. Freida had been living near family in Mesa for the past twelve years but originally spent the majority of their lives in Yorktown, Virginia. Born in 1930, she grew up in the wonderful

community known as Patrick County, Virginia.

Freida was preceded in death by her parents Penn and Lena Fulcher, husband Ralph C. Grogan (passed in 2022), two sisters Charlotte Rorrer and Jane Via Sealey and their spouses along with her special niece

Gloria Rorrer and many other relatives.

She leaves to cherish her memory four children: Marty Zuercher (Gary); Ralph Grogan, Jr. (Vicki); Tim Grogan (Diane); Amy Chandler (Allan); granddaughter Morgan Z. Watson (Vince); step-grandson Tony Pareso; and five great grandchildren.

Bobby N. Pendleton

Mr. Bobby N. Pendleton, age 86 of Patrick Springs, Virginia passed away Saturday, August 10, 2024, at The Joan and Howard Woltz Hospice Home. He was born in Patrick County on September 19, 1937, to the late Roscoe Nelson Pendleton and Mabel Hopkins Pendleton. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 54 years, Paula Plaster Pendleton; two brothers, Bruce Pendleton and Buddy Pendleton; and a sister, Kaye P. Rorrer. Mr. Pendleton was a long-time member of Patrick Springs Pentecostal Holiness Church and served in many capacities such as deacon, treasurer, and choir member. He faithfully served in the United States Army. Mr. Pendleton was civic-minded in every sense of the word; he served for over 50 years in the Ruritan Club of Patrick Springs, was



a lifetime Gideon, and was one of the founding members of Patrick Springs Park. Bobby loved his family deeply and truly enjoyed being Pa Pa to his three granddaughters.

Mr. Pendleton is survived by two children, Rene Coleman of Stuart and Ryan Pendleton (Heather) of Stuart; three grandchildren, Caeley C. Soderlund (Bengt), Melissa Pendleton and Josie Pendleton; one sister, Faye Plaster (Philip) of Patrick Springs; one brother,

Lane Pendleton of Stuart; one sister-in-law, Barbara Pendleton of Woolwine; one brother-in-law, Eugene Rorrer of Stuart; and several nieces and nephews

Funeral services for Mr. Pendleton will be held on Thursday, August 15, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. at Patrick Springs Pentecostal Holiness Church with Pastor Samuel Leonard officiating. Burial will immediately follow in the Providence United Methodist Church Cemetery. Military rites will be provided by the Patrick County Veterans Memorial Honor Guard. The family will receive friends Wednesday evening at the church from 6:00 until 8:00 pm and other times at his son's home. Moody Funeral Home has been entrusted with the services and online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Audrey Alice Collins

Mrs. Audrey Alice Collins, age 82 of Winston-Salem, NC passed away peacefully at her sister's home in Stuart, Va on Friday, August 9, 2024. She was born in Covington, Virginia on November 4, 1941. She was preceded in death by her husband, Donald Edward Collins; and her mother, Lillian Louise Byers Brooks. Audrey retired from Piedmont Airlines/ U. S. Airlines with 40 years of service. It was at work she met and married her beloved husband. Anyone who knew Audrey knew two absolute truths; 1.) purple was her favorite color and 2.) how much she adored her sister, nephew, and especially her great-nephew; she loved going to his



baseball games. He truly was the apple of her eye.

Left to cherish the memories of Audrey Collins are her sister, Tracy Brooks Williams and husband, Danny of Stuart, Virginia; her nephew, Adam Hamby of King, North Carolina; her great-nephew, Troy Hamby of King, North Carolina; many cousins, amazing neighbors, and a few very special extended "family" members.

A celebration of life service will be held on Saturday, August 24, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. at Poplar Springs Church of Christ (Family life center), 7120 NC-66 S, King, NC 27021, with Pastor Chuck Bower officiating. Immediately following the service, the family will receive friends for a time of fellowship.

Flowers may be sent to Poplar Springs on the 24th. Memorial donations may be made to Mountain Valley Hospice and Palliative Care, 1427 Edgewood Drive, Suite 101, Mt. Airy, NC 27030. Moody Funeral Home in Stuart has been entrusted with the services and online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Crash results in death of Stuart man

The Virginia State Police are investigating a single-vehicle crash, which resulted in a fatality. The crash occurred on Monday, August 5, at 7:35 p.m. on U.S. 58, two tenths of a mile east of Virginia 831 in Patrick County.

A 2014 Chevrolet Malibu was traveling east on U.S. 58, when the vehicle ran off the right side of the roadway, struck the guardrail and the embankment.

The driver of the Chevrolet was identified as William Aiden Royall, 19, of Stuart, Va. He was not wearing his seatbelt and died at the scene.

The crash remains under investigation.

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PATRICK PULPITS

Precious dirty hands

By Van Yandell

Ecclesiastes 9: 10 "Whatsoever thy hands find to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave."

Dan and I were friends for many years. If he had a problem with a plumbing or electrical system, he called me and if I had problems with a tractor or anything else with an internal combustion engine, I called him.

I really believe he could disassemble an engine or transmission and reassemble it blindfolded. My mechanical abilities are limited to disassembly.

Once when a tractor radiator needed soldering, I removed it, soldered the leaking seam and reassembled it into the tractor. When finished I told Margie how happy I was to only have two bolts left over.

Dan's hands were always dirty. The grease and engine grime were ground into his hands and probably could not have been removed had he wanted. Over the years, grimy hands became the norm for him and a way of life.

I always saw beyond the hands. The years of work and late nights of working to repair a tractor so a farmer could be back in the field the next morning, spoke volumes.

It was nothing uncommon for Dan to spend 24 straight hours, or longer, to repair a diesel engine or transmission so a trucker could soon be back on the road hauling the food that feeds us or the products we require for living.

The work of tradesmen all over America and the world keep our engines running, our homes in service and products moving. God's creation is in motion and that includes the tradesmen.

We could survive without the academics and artisans but take away the tradesmen and we starve, freeze and learn to walk. This is not to say academics are bad; tradesmen need math to do their work and communication skills are necessary for business to function. And of course, art work is helpful in the design process of many products.

The next time you see someone with years of accumulated and ground-in dirt on his hands, tell him "thank you;" don't criticize him. Dirt is an indication of work. People doing physical work get dirty!

Jesus was a carpenter. He did not have a circular saw, drill, router or planer, but his tools were those necessary to get the job done. He may have been a stone mason. That trade was also referred to as carpenter in the first century.

Woodwork or stone mason carpenter, His hands would definitely have gotten dirty. Simon and Andrew had dirty hands in their professions as fishermen. Paul was a tentmaker, and his hands would have that ground-in dirt from handling animal hides and

the other necessary components for making tents.

At times pastors, evangelists and missionaries have to get their hands dirty. To get in proximity with the unchurched, many of us have worked on projects that got our hands dirty. Working disasters is a primary example. Having dirty hands can be taken literally or figuratively.

Disaster Relief takes first responders into areas where tornados, hurricanes and floods have occurred. One cannot go into such places without getting their hands dirty.

When we think of Jesus on the Cross of Calvary, suffering, bleeding and dying for the sins of all mankind, we are faced with the scene of blood, mixed with dirt and grime all over His precious body.

Matthew 28: 6 "He is not here for He is risen." When Jesus walked out of the Tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, resurrected and alive, he was dirty no more and would never be again.

Those dirty hands we see on the tradesmen of our world are to be cherished as the hands of those that keep the world moving and the rest of us in the necessities of life.

Jesus' dirty hands are to be cherished as the ones that gave us eternity by believing in Him. People do not place importance on what another believes, but God does!

Without the hands of the truckers, farmers, mechanics, carpenters, welders, electricians and many others our lives would drastically change, and we would be returned to the Stone Age in seconds.

The scriptures teach that Jesus gave His precious life for the sins of the world and without Him, our hands and souls would be forever dirty, never to be cleansed of our mortal sin. 1 John 1: 9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Isaiah 64: 6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags." Many consider themselves as unworthy to ask for God's forgiveness. They are absolutely correct. All of us are equal in that respect. None of us are good enough but He offers us redemption by our belief.

At times, Christians must get our hands dirty. We must go into the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Without the knowledge of the teachings of the scriptures, our world will continue to degrade into chaos.

If the citizens of the world do not realize the difference in right and wrong as taught in the Holy Bible, our fate is certain. Be a builder of the Kingdom and get your hands dirty.

Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist and commissioned missionary.

BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. Is the book of Terebint (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. What sprang up and shadowed over Jonah's head, delivering him from his grief? Hemlock, Gourd, Flowers, Fig tree
3. From Judges 16, where did Samson tell Delilah that his great strength lies? Deep voice, Mighty arms, Long hair, Kind heart
4. Who married King David after her evil husband, Nabal,

died? Tamar, Abigail, Vashti, Sarah

5. Which man's name in the book of Genesis means "hairy"? Seth, Cain, Abel, Esau

6. How many times is the word "Lucifer" in the Bible? 1, 13, 39, 66

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Gourd, 3) Long hair, 4) Abigail, 5) Esau, 6) 1 (Isaiah 14:12)

Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit www.Trivia-Guy.com.

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|-------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| ACROSS | 47 —wester | 98 Dismissive facial reaction | DOWN | 37 Mr. Flintstone | 88 Ancient Dead Sea region |
| 1 Big name in health insurance | 48 Fish feature | 100 One — (long odds) | 1 Underground vaults | 40 Feed the kitty | 89 Takes care of |
| 6 2010 Apple debut | 50 Prefix with botany | 102 Delta rival, once | 2 Afrique's Côte d'— | 41 Chuckling with glee | 90 Punta del — |
| 10 Love to excess, with "on" | 51 Dean of Truman's Cabinet | 106 Gallic pal | 3 Attach using paste | 42 Big burden | 92 San Antonio hoopster |
| 14 "Get lost!" | 54 Agreed-upon time | 107 Spread on "Bonanza" | 4 Fish-fowl link | 43 Civil wrong | 93 "Insecure" |
| 19 Park for mobile campers | 57 Hitter Gehrig | 111 End-of-workweek cry | 5 Devoured | 45 Attending | 99 Dog pests |
| 20 Reuben offerer | 58 African land | 114 Formulas of belief | 6 "Let It Go" singer | 46 Ratify | 100 Part of the |
| 21 "Bejabbers!" | 60 Phonies | 116 LA-to-IL dir. | 7 Italian beer brand | 48 Royal decree | 51 Swiss peaks conspiracy |
| 22 Sycophant | 61 Pre-U queue | 117 "Kitchy-kitchy- —!" | 8 British beer | 49 Writing fluid | 52 "Neat!" |
| 23 Welcome words to a job applicant | 62 Liberalism | 118 Appliance that cooks batter | 9 Pulled off | 55 Departing for capital | 101 Diet-friendly, maybe |
| 25 House badly in need of repairs | 67 Low-key "Hey!" | 120 In advance ... or where nine key words in this puzzle might appear | 10 Disobeys | 56 Potent coffee | 103 Turkey's capital |
| 27 Bake-off dish | 70 Ram hard | 124 Whether by land — | 11 "Darby — and the Little People" | 59 Language akin to Thai | 104 Like sacred images |
| 28 Yoko of art | 71 Winter hrs. in D.C. | 125 With 112-Down, she had a "Tootsie" role | 12 Levied | 63 "— bad boy!" | 105 — Scholar |
| 29 Floor layers | 72 Haifa citizens | 126 Sheik, e.g. | 13 Broadway singer Linda | 64 Bronze metal | 107 French for "fathers" |
| 30 Active Sicilian volcano | 76 "Doggone it!" | 127 One of the Osmonds | 14 "Disco" cartoon guy | 65 West Yorkshire city | 109 Uppy types |
| 31 Tampa Bay Rays' stadium | 77 Additional platel | 128 Smelting waste | 15 Manage, as a problem | 66 Key near F1 | 110 — Lingus |
| 36 Org. for some ex-GIs | 79 Lupino of "High Sierra" | 129 Deputy: Abbr. | 16 Engrossed | 68 Mineo of film | 111 Having length and width, but not depth, for short |
| 38 Tijuana Mr. | 81 Trifled (with) | 130 "Doggone it!" | 17 City in Yemen | 69 Month no. 9 | 112 See (very quickly) |
| 39 Makeup of Hawaii | 84 Purposes | 131 1998 Apple debuts | 18 Gore Vidal's Breckinridge | 70 Notion, to Luc | 115 Poet Dove |
| 40 Yellow-orange fruit | 85 D.C. ballplayer | | 24 Ad — | 71 Notion, to Luc | 119 Part of UNLV |
| 44 Bed for sushi | 86 Certain role-playing game organizer | | 26 Reply to an invite | 72 SSNs, e.g. | 120 Watering hole |
| | 91 Gives, as duties | | 29 Traffic snarl | 73 Paper bundle | 121 Notable period of time |
| | 94 Spanish national hero | | 32 Skin opening | 74 — instant | 122 Former big record co. |
| | 95 Part of ENT | | 33 Pupil locale | 75 Some NCOs | 123 Easter entree |
| | 96 Ar-tee linkup | | 34 Really rail at | 77 Scorch | |
| | 97 Dandy dudes | | 35 Dud | 78 Baby's bottle | |
| | | | | 79 Notion, to Luc | |
| | | | | 80 "— noted" | |
| | | | | 82 "The — lama, he's a priest" | |
| | | | | 83 Sumac of song | |
| | | | | 87 World's tallest creatures | |

Celebrity Imposter AI Scams

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has captured the world's attention, but it has also captured the attention of criminal scammers. One area where AI scams are particularly dangerous is celebrity impostor scams.

For many years, criminals have impersonated celebrities online to steal from fans. Fake celebrity profiles offer fans personal connection, investment opportunities, or the chance to support favorite charities.

AI has allowed criminals to make these scams more realistic than ever with "deepfake" videos. With this technology, criminals can create videos where it looks and sounds like the celebrity is speaking, but it is in fact completely computer gen-

erated. Criminal scammers have used this technology for anything from fake product endorsements to promotions for bogus VIP ticket sales.

Posting on a celebrity's social media account might be exciting, but it could put you at risk of this impostor scam. In whatever way you choose to enjoy your favorite celebs, do so recognizing that an opportunity to connect with them personally is likely a scam.

AARP Fraud Watch Network™ is a free resource for all. Learn how to proactively spot scams or get guidance if you've been targeted. Visit aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork or call our dedicated helpline to speak to a fraud specialist at 877-908-3360.

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The columnists' views appearing on this page do not necessarily reflect the editorial position of *The Enterprise*.

LEGAL

RFP 2024 MNT-003
The Patrick County School Board is accepting competitive sealed proposals from licensed contractors for the Gymnasium Alterations and Addition Project at Blue Ridge Elementary School, 5135 Ararat, VA 24053. RFP electronic file plans are available from the Architect's office (88knight@comcast.net) or School Maintenance Office, Chad Haynes (chad.haynes@patrick.k12.va.us). Proposals will be received on Thursday, September 12, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. at the Patrick County School Board Office, 132 North Main Street, Stuart, VA 24171.

LEGAL

RFP #2024-SPED-01 - Patrick County Public Schools - ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) Services
The Patrick County School Board is accepting competitive sealed proposals from licensed certified behavioral analysts for ABA services for school session 2024-2025 (August 8, 2024 - June 30, 2025). Request for Proposals (RFP) packets can be picked up Monday through Friday between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM at the Patrick County School Board Office, 132 N. Main St., Stuart, VA 24171. RFPs will be accepted at the school board until 4:30 PM on August 16, 2024. For further information, call 276-694-3163, Director of Special Education.

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Marksmen participate in Central District

The Patrick County 4-H Marksmen recently traveled to Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center in Appomattox, Virginia on Saturday, July 13 to take part in the 2024 Central District Shooting Education Competition. Thirteen 4-H shooting clubs from around the state attended, with more than 99 kids competing in six different events. Competing for the Patrick County 4-H Marksmen were Abby Corriher, Levi Corriher, Gabe Reynolds, Jada Hylton, Lucas Black, Trenton Miller, Reagan Underwood, Cooper Wikstrom, and Maci Whitlock.

Individual and team results include:

Air Pistol PPP Basic Supported Individual: Trenton Miller, 2nd place, Lucas Black, 3rd place

Air Pistol PPP Basic Supported Team – 3rd place: Trenton Miller, Lucas Black

Air Rifle 3P Junior Individual: Reagan Underwood, 1st place, Cooper Wikstrom, 2nd place, Lucas Black, 4th place, Trenton Miller, 5th place, Maci Whitlock, 6th place

Air Rifle 3P Junior Team – 1st place: Reagan Underwood, Cooper Wikstrom, Lucas Black

Air Rifle 3P Senior Individual: Abby Corriher, 3rd place, Levi Corriher, 7th place, Gabe Reynolds, 8th place

Air Rifle 3P Senior Team – 2nd place: Abby Corriher, Levi Corriher, Gabe Reynolds

Archery Compound Junior Individual: Jada Hylton, 12th place

Archery Instinctive Senior Individual: Abby Corriher, 4th place,

Levi Corriher, 11th place, Gabe Reynolds, 12th place

Archery Instinctive Senior Team – 3rd place: Abby Corriher, Levi Corriher, Gabe Reynolds

BB 10 and under Individual: Lucas Black, 1st place, Trenton Miller, 2nd place

BB 11 and up Individual: Reagan Underwood, 2nd place, Maci Whitlock, 3rd place, Cooper Wikstrom, 4th place

BB 10 and under Team – 1st place: Lucas Black, Trenton Miller

BB 11 and up Team – 1st place: Reagan Underwood, Maci Whitlock, Cooper Wikstrom

3P Smallbore Scope Junior Individual: Maci Whitlock, 1st place, Reagan Underwood, 2nd place, Cooper Wikstrom, 4th place

3P Smallbore Scope Junior Team – 1st place: Maci Whitlock, Reagan Underwood, Cooper Wikstrom

3P Smallbore Iron Senior Individual: Abby Corriher, 3rd place, Levi Corriher, 8th place, Gabe Reynolds, 9th place

3P Smallbore Iron Senior Team – 3rd place: Abby Corriher, Levi Corriher, Gabe Reynolds

Silhouettes Smallbore Rifle Junior Individual: Maci Whitlock 1st, Reagan Underwood, 3rd, Cooper Wikstrom 7th, Trenton Miller 18th, Lucas Black 20th

Silhouettes Smallbore Rifle Junior Team – 2nd place: Maci Whitlock, Cooper Wikstrom, Reagan Underwood

Silhouettes Smallbore Rifle Senior Individual: Abby Corriher, 4th place, Levi Corriher, 11th place, Gabe Reynolds, 17th place



(Left to right) Jada Hylton, Maci Whitlock, Reagan Underwood, Cooper Wikstrom, Lucas Black, Trenton Miller.

Silhouettes Smallbore Rifle Senior Team – 4th place: Abby Corriher, Levi Corriher, Gabe Reynolds

For more information on the 2024 Central District Shooting Education Competition results visit <http://www.orionresults.com/vt> and choose Central District 2024 under the recent results section.

The Patrick County 4-H Marksmen use shooting as a vehicle to teach youth ages 9-19 life skills such as responsibility, self-discipline, and teamwork through skills learned in archery, muzzle loading, pistol, rifle, and shotgun. Through these disciplines, youth also learn firearm safety and marksmanship. Thanks to our generous supporters American Legion Post 105 and Meadows of Dan Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The Patrick County 4-H Marksmen Club practices in Stuart and new members are welcome start-



(Left to right) Abby Corriher, Levi Corriher

ing in October 2024. For more information, please contact the Patrick County Extension Office at (276) 694-3341.

Steep Canyon Rangers to perform Aug. 17

The Steep Canyon Rangers will perform as part of the Deep Roots, Many Voices: Summer Outdoor Concert Series at 7 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 17, in the Blue Ridge Music Center's outdoor amphitheater on the Blue Ridge Parkway just south of Galax, Va.

Steep Canyon Rangers have long held traditional bluegrass paramount, while possessing an exceptional ability to incorporate influences from other genres such as country, jam, and Americana.

The North Carolina natives rose to the top of the bluegrass genre, headlining festivals such as Merlefest and Grey Fox Bluegrass after forming in college in 2000. Over its quarter-century career, the band has received recognition from well beyond the world of bluegrass and its members have earned a reputation as some of the most influential songwriters in Americana today. In a 2024 interview, Garret K. Woodward of Rolling Stone called the band, "one of the most sought-after groups in Americana, bluegrass, and indie folk."

Steep Canyon Rangers has released 14 studio albums including the Grammy-winning Nobody Knows You (2012) and the Grammy-nominated live album North Carolina Songbook (2019), which was recorded at MerleFest, and features covers of songs by artists who were born in North Carolina, including James Taylor, Doc Watson, and Thelonious Monk. The album drew acclaim and topped the Billboard Bluegrass Chart for multiple weeks after its release.

The band has answered the demand for a new live album with Live at Greenfield Lake, which will be released on Aug. 30. The album captures the magic of the group's chemistry, their unparalleled harmonies, and the rich songwriting that has made them one of the most critically acclaimed groups in Americana music. Spell-binding and tender performances of songs like "Recommend Me" and "Birds of Ohio" are mixed with blistering, barn burning renditions of "Afterglow" and "Sunny Days," showcasing the breadth of styles and genres that the Rangers tackle in concert.

Steep Canyon Rangers is made up of Graham Sharp (banjo, vocals), Mike Guggino (mandolin/mandola, vocals), Aaron Burdett (guitar, vocals), Nicky Sanders (fiddle, vocals), Mike Ashworth (drums, dobro, guitar, vocals), and Barrett



The Steep Canyon Rangers

Smith (bass, guitar, vocals).

Tickets are \$45 in advance, \$50 the day of the show, and \$20 for children ages 12 and younger. Advance tickets are available at BlueRidgeMusicCenter.org. Tickets can be purchased on the evening of the show at the admission gates.

Concertgoers are invited to kick off the Steep Canyon Rangers concert at a special preshow fundraiser supporting enhancements to the Music Center. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and drinks from 5 to 7 p.m. on the Visitor Center breezeway. Attendees will also receive early entry to the amphitheater at 5 p.m. to reserve their preferred spot. Tickets are \$100 per person and the proceeds will support updates and repairs at the venue. Visit BlueRidgeMusicCenter.org to purchase tickets.

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.

This performance in the series is sponsored by W.L.A. Trucking. The presenting sponsors for the series are W.L.A. Trucking and Yadkin Arts Council.

Kaine Releases New Plank of Kitchen Table Agenda

Last week at a roundtable in Floyd, U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine released a new plank of his "Kaine Kitchen Table Agenda:" investing in career and technical education.

"I'm proud to be a champion for investing in career and technical education in the Senate. I started the Senate Career and Technical Education Caucus to bring together members from both sides of the aisle who want to ensure the future of our workforce is in good hands," said Kaine, D-Richmond. "An important part of building up the local workforce and partnering with career and technical centers is ensuring that students are aware of opportunities outside of a traditional path. That's why I am releasing the second plank of my Kaine Kitchen Table economic agenda today."

Kaine's Jumpstarting Our Businesses by Supporting Students (JOBS) Act would allow students to use federal Pell Grants to afford high-quality, shorter-term job training programs. He believes that expanding Pell Grant eligibility will open students to more opportunities outside of the traditional path.

In June, Kaine released the first plank of his Kitchen Table Agenda and highlighted his work to lower prescription drug costs. Around the Commonwealth, in the coming months, Senator Kaine will highlight new planks of his plan to discuss how he is working to lower costs for all Virginians. Other planks of his "Kaine Kitchen Table Agenda" include cutting the cost of child care, slashing taxes for working families, and making housing affordable.

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Meetings

Monday, Aug. 12
The Patrick County Board of Supervisors will meet at 6 p.m. in the third-floor court room of the Patrick County Administration building.

Thursday, Aug. 15
The Patrick County School Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. in the school board office.

Tuesday, Aug. 20
The Patrick County Planning Commission will meet at 6 p.m. in the community room of the Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) Stuart site.

Wednesday, Aug. 21
The Stuart Town Council will meet at 7 p.m. in the town office.

Events

Wednesday, Aug. 14
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.

Fairystone State Park will hold a Mountain View/Horse Camp Trail at 8:30 a.m. at the Amphitheater Parking Lot and Moonshine Murders at 2:30 p.m. at Shelter 4.

Thursday, Aug. 15
The Carroll County Genealogy Club will hold a brief business meeting at 5 p.m. in the Historical Courthouse on the left side. Following the meeting the club will present a program entitled "Pre 1850 US Genealogy Research Strategies."

The Patrick County Republican Committee will meet at 6 p.m. Guests are welcome.

Friday, Aug. 16
Fairy Stone State Park will hold a Moonshine Hollow Hike, 10 a.m. at the Visitor Center; Fairy Stone Hunt, 12:30 p.m., Visitors Center, and ADA Trail Hike at 1:15 p.m. (Reservation required); Fayerdale: The Missing Town, 2:30 p.m., Shelter 4, and Canoeing with Ghosts, 8 p.m., Beach Breezeway.

Saturday, Aug. 17
New Hope Church of the Brethren will have music by The Churchmen from 4-7 p.m., with food, games, and a prayer tent onsite. Free event. Bring your own lawn chair.

Mt. Nebo Holiness Church will hold the 8th annual bike ride, car show, and fish fry. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the ride leaves at 11 a.m. The cost is \$20 per bike or autos, and this covers the meal for the driver. The fish fry will start at 8 a.m., and vendors will be on site.

Fairy Stone State Park events include Old Hickory Trail, 10 a.m., Shelter 4; Fairy Stone Hunt, 12 p.m., Visitors Center; Magic Trees,

3:30 p.m., Shelter 4; CSI: Creek Scene Investigation, 4:30 p.m., Shelter 4; Living with Black Bears in VA, 8 p.m., Shelter 4.

Sunday, Aug. 18
The 72nd annual Griffith Family Reunion will be held at Griffith Valley. Bring food and drinks. Lunch starts at 1 p.m.

Ross Harbour Methodist Church will hold a Homecoming with special singers "Four to One" starting at 10 a.m. The worship will follow at 11 a.m. with special speaker David Gaylor Jr. A meal follows.

Fairy Stone State Park events: Moonshine Hollow Hike, 10 a.m., Visitor Center; Fairy Stone Hunt, 12 p.m., Visitors Center; Moonshine Murders, 2:30 p.m., Shelter 4; and Nature's Invaders, 5 p.m., Shelter 4.

Monday, Aug. 19
Fairy Stone State Park will hold a Fairy Stone Hunt, 12 p.m., Visitors Center, and a Monday Market from 5-7 p.m. at Shelters 3 & 4.

Tuesday, August 20
Fairy Stone State Park will hold a Fairy Stone Hunt at 12 p.m. at the Visitors Center.

Wednesday, August 21
Fairy Stone State Park will hold a Stuart's Knob Hike at 8:30 a.m. at Iron Mine Parking Lot and a Fairy Stone Hunt at 11 a.m. at Visitors Center

Monday, Aug. 19 - Wednesday, Aug. 21
Revival at Ross Harbour Methodist Church starting at 7 p.m. each day. Dave Taylor, speaker and singer Philip Adams, are scheduled for Monday. On Tuesday, David Gaylor Jr., with the Sycamore Sisters. On Wednesday, Tommy Shepard will be the guest speaker and Roger Wells will sing.

Thursday, Aug. 22
The Patrick County Democratic Committee will host its annual mixer at the Hooker Building at Rotary Field from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Karen Baker, candidate for U.S. House of Representatives will be at the event.

Fairy Stone State Park events include a Lakeshore Trail, 8:30 a.m., Amphitheater Parking Lot; Fairy Stone Hunt, 11:30 a.m., Visitors Center, and Who Made Those Tracks While You Slept? at 3 p.m., Shelter 4.

Friday, Aug. 23
Girl Scout Troop #1302 will hold a yard sale from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Providence United Methodist Church in Patrick Springs. Proceeds from the event will go to help with travel and events for the girls.

Saturday, Aug. 24
Girl Scout Troop #1302 will hold a yard and bake sale from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and lunch - starting at 10:30 a.m., that includes hotdogs, chips, soda, and water, at the Providence United Methodist Church in Patrick Springs. Proceeds from

the event will go to help with travel and events for the girls.

Saturday, Sept. 7
Piedmont Community Services (PCS) will hold its 4th annual National Recovery Month event at Dehart Park from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This year's theme is "Peers Soar in 2024."

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.

Initial claims lower this week, continued claims rise

The 1,937 unemployment insurance weekly initial claims filed during the week ending August 3, 2024, are 27.8 percent lower than last week's 2,682 claims and 23.1 percent lower than the comparable week of last year (2,520), according to Virginia Works.

Nearly 86 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (61 percent) were Administrative and Support and Waste Management

(239); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (229); Health Care and Social Assistance (182); Retail Trade (169); and Manufacturing (166).

Continued weeks claims (16,893) were 0.2 percent higher than last week (16,858) and were 23.5 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (13,678). Nearly 93 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (58 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (2,505); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,209); Health Care and Social Assistance (1,684); Accommodation and Food Services (1,411); and Manufacturing (1,403).

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.

Weekly SUDOKU
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
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Latest survey indicates increase in workers switching jobs

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' May 2024 Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) reports the churn rate, an indicator of worker movement from job to job, increased over the month, according to Virginia Works (the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement).

The most recent BLS JOLTS survey data suggests the number of May 2024 hires in Virginia rose by 23,000 over the month and was up by 28 percent from five years earlier. BLS JOLTS data provides information on all the pieces that go into the net change in the number of jobs. These components include job openings, hires, layoffs, voluntary quits, and other job separations (which includes retirements and worker deaths). Putting those components together reveals the overall change in payroll employment. JOLTS data is seasonally adjusted and describes conditions on the last business day of the month. Current month's data are preliminary and the previous month's data have been revised.

On the last business day in May, there were 257,000 job openings in Virginia, seasonally adjusted, a 4,000 increase from April's revised figure. The number of U.S. job openings the number of job openings changed little at 8.1 million. This measure was down by 1.2 million over the year. Job openings decreased in accommodation and food services (-147,000) and in private educational services (-34,000). The number of job openings increased in state and local government, excluding education (+117,000), durable goods manufacturing (+97,000), and federal government (+37,000). The largest increases in the job openings level occurred in California (+90,000) and New York (+45,000), as well as in New Jersey and Washington +38,000 each). The decreases occurred in Texas (-76,000), Tennessee (-22,000), and Arizona (-21,000).

In Virginia, the May job openings rate was 5.7 percent, little changed from April's rate. The U.S. rate was little changed at 4.9 percent in May. The largest increases in job openings rates occurred in Washington (+1.0 percentage point) and in Indiana and New Jersey (+0.8 point each). A significant decrease occurred in Texas (-0.5 point).

The number of hires in Virginia rose to 189,000 in May, an increase of 23,000 over the month and up by 11,000 from May 2023. JOLTS defines hires as all additions to the payroll during the month. The number of hires was 29 percent lower than the series high of 267,000 set in June 2020. In May, the number of hires was little changed at 5.8 million. Over the year, hires were down by 415,000. The largest increases in the hires level occurred in New York (+43,000), Michigan (+32,000), and North Dakota (+4,000). A significant decrease occurred in Louisiana (-15,000). In Virginia, the 4.5 hires rate was an increase from April's revised 3.9 percent rate. The U.S. rate, at 3.6 percent, changed little in May. Large increases in the hires rate occurred in North Dakota (+0.8 percentage point), Michigan (+0.7 point), and New York (+0.4 point). The decrease occurred in Louisiana (-0.8 point).

The Virginia hires-per-job-openings (HPJO) ratio rose to 0.74, its highest level since December 2020. This measure shows the rate of hiring compared to open jobs and is a proxy for time to fill positions.

In May 2024, there were 0.5 unemployed per job opening in the Commonwealth, compared to nationwide, with 0.8 unemployed per job opening nationwide. In Virginia, the unemployed per job opening ratio (sometimes called the 'job seekers ratio') peaked at 4.4 unemployed per job opening in February 2010 during the Great Recession, while the number of unemployed workers per job opening stood at 3.3 in April 2020 during the height of pandemic employment impacts.

Total separations in Virginia increased by 17,000 to 168,000. Nationwide, the number of total separations in May changed little at 5.4 million. This measure was down by 424,000 over the year. Large increases in the total separations level occurred in Massachusetts (+30,000), as well as in Idaho and Montana (+9,000 each). A significant decrease occurred in Ohio (-32,000). The Virginia total separations rate rose to 4.0 percent, the highest rate in a year. The U.S. total separations rate changed little at 3.4 percent. Significant increases in total separations rates occurred in Montana (+1.6 percentage points), Idaho (+1.0 point), and Massachusetts (+0.8 point). A significant decrease occurred in Ohio (-0.5 point).

An estimated 111,000 workers quit jobs from Virginia employers in May. The number of quits increased 15,000 from April's revised figure. That was lower by 16 percent over-the-year but 19 percent higher than five years earlier. Quits, a component of total separations, are voluntary separations initiated by the employee. In May, the number of quits nationwide was little changed at 3.5 million. Over the year, quits were down by 550,000.

Significant increases in the quits level occurred in California (+75,000) and Massachusetts (+19,000), as well as in Idaho and Mississippi (+7,000 each). Large decreases occurred in Florida (-71,000), Ohio (-25,000), and Colorado (-23,000). The quits rate in the Commonwealth edged up to 2.6 percent and remained at levels seen over the last two years. The U.S. rate was 2.2 percent for the seventh month in a row in May. Significant increases in quits rates occurred in Idaho (+0.7 percentage point), Massachusetts (+0.5 point), and California (+0.4 point). Significant decreases occurred in Colorado (-0.8 point), Florida (-0.7 point), and Ohio (-0.4 point).

The number of layoffs and discharges in Virginia was 49,000 in May. This was up by 20 percent over the year and up by a third from five years earlier. Layoffs and discharges are countercyclical, which means that layoffs typically increase during economic contractions and decrease during economic expansions. In May, the number of U.S. layoffs and discharges changed little at 1.7 million. Significant increases in the layoffs and discharges level occurred in Florida (+51,000), Texas (+34,000), as well as in Montana and Oklahoma (+9,000 each). Significant decreases occurred in Arizona (-12,000) and Connecticut (-7,000).

The Virginia layoffs and discharges rate edged up to 1.2 percent, while the U.S. rate was little changed at 1.0 percent but for establishments with 5,000 or more employees, the layoffs and discharges rate increased. The largest increases occurred in Montana (+1.7 percentage points), Florida (+0.6 point), and Oklahoma (+0.5 point). The decreases occurred in Connecticut (-0.5 point) and Arizona (-0.4 point).

The May 'churn' rate (the sum of the hires rate and total separations rate) in Virginia rose by a full percentage point from April's revised 7.5 percent figure, the fastest pace in a year. This was a departure from nationwide as recent U.S. trends indicated a continued deceleration of movement of workers from job to job since the beginning of 2022. While more volatile month-to-month, Virginia's pace has been more active for over a year.

On the last business day in May 2024, hiring in Virginia remained more prevalent than before the pandemic as the number of hires and hires per job opening rose to their highest level in a year. At the same time, job separations also rose over the month, primarily driven by job quitting. This increased hiring and separation activity pushed a measure of job change velocity, the churn rate, upward, indicating a still-active labor market for job seekers in the Commonwealth heading into summer.

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Robotic pets used to help veterans cope with dementia

A Falls Church-based company, Capital Caring Health, is providing companion robotic pets for veterans at the Commonwealth's veteran care centers, according to the Virginia Department of Veterans Services.

Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center in Richmond, Davis & McDaniel Veterans Care Center in Roanoke,

and Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center in Virginia Beach each received six robotic pets — three dogs and three cats. The Puller Veterans Care Center in Warrenton will also receive six robotic pets upon its opening.

According to clinical studies and first-hand experience at Capital Caring Health, these companion pets have

been proven to improve the quality of life of veterans and others suffering from dementia and/or loneliness.

"We find that the robotic pets are very helpful in assisting with residents when they are agitated or restless," said Robyn Jennings, Administrator at Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center in Richmond. "It gives the veterans a sense of peace when holding the pets."

The pets arrive ready to enjoy and interactively react to human touch and voice like real pets. Capital Caring Health has donated robotic pets not just to Virginia's state-run veterans care

centers, but to every state-operated veterans care center throughout the Nation.

"Recipients of our robotic pets usually keep them around the clock and name them," said Stephen Cone, Chief of Communications, Marketing & Philanthropy at Capital Caring Health. "Personalities of the veterans change from agitated and confused to often joyful, happy and calm — a dramatic transformation that improves the veterans' lives. I hear from families all the time how miraculous it is for their family member to have received one of these pets."

These robotic companion pets are provided free of charge to any professional caregiver or family caregiver who contacts the company on behalf of a loved one or patient with dementia, thanks to donations from individuals, companies, and foundations.

Recently, the veterans care centers also implemented additional technology to include the use of virtual reality (VR) headsets — all with the goal to improve the lives of the veterans who live there.

"Our goal is to consistently improve the quality of life of the residents in our care centers, which is why we are committed to utilizing the most innovative technology to meet their needs," said Chuck Zingler, Virginia Department of Veterans Services Commissioner. "Not only are we implementing these robotic pets for our dementia patients, but we also have been using virtual reality (VR) headsets to assist with PTSD, as well as telehealth appointments to make it easier for our less mobile residents to still meet with their doctors."

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Proposed policy would reduce Salmonella in raw poultry products

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued a comprehensive proposed rule and determination to more effectively reduce Salmonella contamination and illnesses associated with raw poultry products. This is the culmination of FSIS' three-year effort to reevaluate their strategy for controlling Salmonella rates in poultry and protect American consumers from foodborne illness linked to consumption of poultry products.

Salmonella bacteria cause over 1 million human infections in the United States each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Food is the leading source of Salmonella infections and poultry is among the leading sources of foodborne Salmonella illnesses. FSIS estimates that there are 125,000 chicken-associated and almost 43,000 turkey-associated foodborne Salmonella illnesses per year. Despite FSIS data indicating that Salmonella contamination in poultry products has been decreasing, there has not been an observed reduction in Salmonella illnesses.

"Far too many consumers become sick from poultry contaminated with Salmonella, and today's announcement marks a historic step forward to combat this threat," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "This proposed framework is a systematic approach to addressing Salmonella contamination at poultry slaughter and processing, which includes enforceable standards that will result in safer food for consumers and fewer illnesses."

The proposal would establish final product standards to prevent raw chicken carcasses, chicken parts, ground chicken, and ground turkey products that contain any type of Salmonella at or above 10 colony forming units (CFU) per gram/ml and any detectable level of at least one of the Salmonella serotypes of public health significance from entering commerce. The proposed Salmonella serotypes of public health significance identified for raw chicken carcasses, chicken parts, and comminuted chicken are Enteritidis, Typhimurium, ... and for raw comminuted turkey are Hadar, Typhimurium, and Muenchen. The proposal would also require poultry establishments to develop a microbial monitoring program to prevent pathogen contamination throughout the slaughter system.

"The proposed Salmonella framework is grounded in data and rigorous scientific evaluation, and it reflects feedback from extensive

stakeholder engagement," said USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Emilio Esteban. "We encourage all interested stakeholders to submit comments and relevant data on the proposal as we work to finalize data-driven, science-based regulatory policies to address Salmonella in poultry."

Since 2021, the FSIS initiated several activities designed to gather data and information to inform the framework proposed rule and determination. These activities included charging the National Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Food to provide guidance on the types of microbiological criteria the agency might use to better prevent Salmonella infections associated with poultry products; conducting a risk profile for pathogenic Salmonella subtypes in poultry and developing two quantitative risk assessments; hosting a public meeting and several roundtables; conducting an exploratory sampling program for young chicken carcasses to generate microbial data and adding quantification to FSIS' Salmonella testing program.

The Salmonella framework proposed rule and determination builds on the FSIS' continued efforts under the Biden-Harris Administration to protect American consumers, including preventing false and misleading label claims. As part of this effort, earlier this year, the FSIS published a final determination to declare Salmonella an adulterant in raw breaded stuffed chicken products when they exceed the threshold of 1 CFU per gram of Salmonella contamination. FSIS also announced this year a final rule allowing the voluntary "Product of USA" claim to be applied only to those FSIS-regulated products that are derived from animals born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the United States.

Comments on this proposal must be received within 60 days after publication in the Federal Register.

Comments may be submitted online via the federal eRulemaking portal, available at www.regulations.gov; by mail sent to Docket Clerk, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Mailstop 3758, Washington, D.C. 20250-3700, or by hand or courier delivery to 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Jamie L. Whitten Building, Room 350-E, Washington, D.C. 20250-3700. All items submitted by mail or electronic mail must include the agency name and docket number FSIS-2023-0028.



Study shows undocumented immigrants contribute hundreds of millions to VA tax coffers

By Will Walkey
Virginia News Connection

A new study sheds light on the tax contributions paid by undocumented immigrants. In Virginia, they contribute nearly \$700 million to state and local coffers, but would pay an additional \$167 million in Virginia taxes if they were granted work authorization.

The study by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, uses data from the U.S. Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics and other sources.

Freddy Mejia, policy director for the nonprofit Commonwealth Institute, said it is just one way to quantify the effect of the roughly quarter million undocumented immigrants in Virginia.

"Immigrants really strengthen our state," Mejia asserted. "Virginia continues to move forward because

of immigrants' economic, social and cultural contributions to each and every one of our communities."

Undocumented immigrants pay sales, property, income and other taxes, yet they cannot access some programs they pay into, including Medicare, Social Security and Unemployment Insurance.

Mejia pointed out the study highlights barriers for the Commonwealth's immigrant population. For instance, about half of the undocumented children in Virginia do not have health coverage, compared to under 4% of U.S. citizens.

"If we can invest just a portion of that \$700 million to health coverage, we can ensure that this next group of workers, of doctors, of lawyers, are able to achieve those dreams and do so with good health and a great education," Mejia urged.

Notary Public Classes to start in August

Surry Community College is offering two Notary Public classes in the month of August.

The first course section will meet on Wednesday, Aug. 21, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at The Yadkin Center, 1001 College Drive, Yadkinville. The second course section will meet on Wednesday, Aug. 28, from 5 to 9 p.m. at The Yadkin Center.

Notary Public courses are designed to provide instruction to individuals who want to become commissioned as a Notary Public. Topics include legal, ethical, and procedural requirements of the Notary Act. Upon completion of this course with a passing exam grade of 80 percent, a person is eligible to submit an application with the N.C. Secretary of State Office.

Tuition for the course is \$71. For more information or to register,



Yadkin Center, at (336) 386-3584 or underwood@surry.edu.

Yadkin Center, at (336) 386-3584 or underwood@surry.edu.

Home Country

Slim Randles

"Waal," said Windy, stirring his coffee. "I hate to do this here, but I'm afeerd a whole bunch of it's Doc's fault."

This announcement coincided with Doc coming to join us at the counter here at the Mule Barn Coffee Shop and Desperate Dilemma Depository. Yeah, it's kinda like that.

"So Windy," Doc asked, flipping his coffee mug to the upright and fillable position, "what have I done now?"

"Oh, Doc," Windy said, "ain't so much you as it is doctorin' in the general, you know. You guys go to school until you're 72 and have to stick us with words we don't know, can't say, and don't need."

Doc waited and looked at his old friend before adding sugar.

"Ya see, Doc," said Windy, "ever since I found my ownself approachin' middle age ..."

"Yeah, Windy, but from which end?"

Enough to allow for more ideas.

"Wellsir, them doctor guys come up with diseases and pills nobody else can say proper like, and not even the girl at the drugstore kin spell 'em right. Like fluterag-inatic flim-flams. Heck, it you had 'em you'd have to write down how to spell them, and it still wouldn't tell ya what the pills do."

Windy looked around. "So I'm gonna fix that. Yessir, ol' Alphonse Wilson's gonna straighten out the wonderful world of medicine and make it easier on real people. Got a couple examples here of my real people translations. Like 'Quitchee.' See? It's a real people translation of stomach pills. It's short for Quitchee Belyachin'."

Doc nodded. "I think you've got something there, Windy. Let me know when you get to 'Migraine is Just Like Yore Grain,' Will you? And I'm buying the coffee this morning."

Some times science

can be amazing.

Windy, Doc and the rest of the bunch may be found in the book Home Country from Rio Grande Press. <http://nmsantos.com/Bookstore/Misc-Books/Home/Home.html>.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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STEP, Inc. provides home weatherization services funded by the Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). In these activities, STEP, Inc., its contractors and sub-contractors will, to the greatest extent feasible, utilize qualified persons and businesses who permanently reside within Patrick, Franklin and surrounding counties for employment and training positions. Candidates for weatherization measures must be in compliance with the Virginia Weatherization Standards and Field Guide requirements. Activities may include: windows, HVAC, electrical and plumbing repairs and/or replacement, insulation and other measures.

Individuals and businesses interested in participating in the competitive opportunities associated with these projects should submit written requests, including their name address, phone number and the product or services provided to:

Sharon Lambert, Director of Housing
Steve Hall, Housing Specialist
STEP, Inc.
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The model 77C Drill from Haybuster has the ability to drill many different varieties and sizes of seed into all types of planting conditions ranging from heavy residue no-tillage to minimum tillage and conventional tillage fields.

Why No-Till? Here are ten benefits of No-Till Systems: reduced soil erosion, more efficient use of seed, lower fuel cost, lower labor needs per acre, higher water infiltration, lower moisture evaporation, organic matter conservation and improvement, improved soil structure, higher biological activity and reduced phosphorus losses.

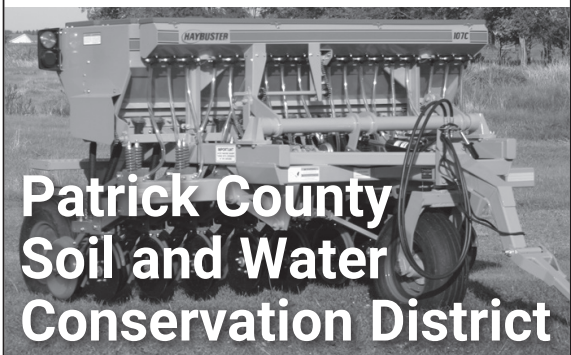
No-Till Farming increases the amount of water that infiltrates into the soil, increases organic matter retention and improves the cycling of nutrients in the soil. It also reduces or eliminates soil erosion from crop fields. A huge benefit is improvement in soil health. It increases the amount and variety of life in and on the soil, making soils more resilient and capable of growing better-quality crops.

Farm operations that utilize no-till farming are much more efficient and will often see a cost-savings in fuel and fertilizer usage quickly. One of the goals is to help farmers renovate pastures so that the economic viability of the farm is restored, and the natural resources are protected and improved.

It plants 7' wide and is perfect for planting a variety of seeds for smaller wildlife plots and Renovating pastures.

The 77C is a towable unit and operating the drill requires at least a 40-horsepower tractor with hydraulic capability.

The Haybuster drill comes standard with 3 seed boxes with individual acre metering.



Patrick County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Virginia Film Festival (By Eze Amos, VCA Grantee)

Arts programs get funding boost

Localities in our coverage areas were among several in Virginia to receive grants from the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA).

According to the commission, grant winners included:

Henry County Collinsville Creative Communities Partnership Grant (CCPG) for Piedmont Arts Association; Henry County Public Schools received an Arts in Practice Grant, Education Impact Grant and VA250 Impact Grant

The Arts Association Martinsville received General Operating Support for Medium and Large Organizations (GOS) for Piedmont Arts Association.

Da Capo Virginia in Martinsville received an Operating Support for Small Organizations (OSS) grant.

Martinsville City Public Schools received a VA250 Impact Grant for Martinsville High School.

And Patrick County received a Creative Communities Partnership Grant (CCPG) for the Reynolds Homestead.

Grant allocations throughout Virginia totaled more than \$5.1 million to support arts organizations, and arts-centric programs for FY25, according to the VCA.

Grant allocations include:

*151 General Operating Support for Medium and Large Organizations (GOS) Grants, bolstering arts organizations to continue, strengthen, and expand arts experiences that benefit all Virginians.

*86 Operating Support Small Grants, increasing support for small and emerging arts organizations central to the vibrancy of Virginia's communities.

*108 Creative Community Partnership Grants, catalyzing matching funds exceeding \$5.3 million from localities and providing funding for more than 240 arts organizations.

*19 Community Impact Grants, igniting new and innovative art-based projects or services that reach and impact communities.

*25 Education Impact Grants, providing opportunities for Virginia's students, educators, and other adult populations to participate in and learn through the arts.

*22 VA250 Impact Grants, facilitating new and innovative art-based programs or services commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the birth of our nation and the American Revolution.

Discover an array of flavors in Virginia-grown melons

Some consumers thump watermelons to determine ripeness. Others check for yellow spots. But there is one foolproof method for choosing the best melon.

"Know your grower," said Rick Brossman, a Loudoun County produce farmer who helps operate Brossman's Family Farm and Farmstand.

The fourth-generation farmer grows multiple varieties of watermelon, cantaloupe and other crops on 85 acres to suit the tastes and dietary needs of Northern Virginia's diverse ethnic populations. With a meticulous process that starts in winter, the Brossmans graft their watermelons to naturally resist blight and parasites.

"Most watermelons wilt in heat, but these won't because of vigorous grafts on the root stalk," Brossman said. "Grafted melon produces a strong root base that's enormous, able to draw in all the nutrients we feed."

Brossman's watermelon inventory includes seedless Sugar Babies, seeded Sangria Melons, Yellow Babies and Bottle Rockets.

"The sugar babies are by far the best watermelon in my opinion," he said. "They're as sweet as can be."

Netted muskmelons, commonly referred to as cantaloupe, also run the gamut of sweetness and texture. Some communities within Brossman's customer base prefer large, fleshy fruit, and others seek intense sweetness.

"There is much diversity in the specialty muskmelon group," said Chris Mullins, Virginia Coopera-

tive Extension horticulture specialist at Virginia State University. "Each melon type has unique textures, flavors, and vary in their sweetness. Some have more sweetness and flavor than the traditional cantaloupe."

Brossman's cantaloupes include traditionally sweet Athenas, and larger, honey-sweet Aphrodites, plus deep-yellow canary melons, also known as Spanish melon, with a blend of cantaloupe and honeydew flavors.

The Spanish melon has an "extremely crisp, clean, sweet taste," Brossman explained.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2022 census shows cantaloupes are grown on 301 acres across 155 Virginia farms. Watermelon is grown on 241 farms totaling 595 acres. Those numbers, reported every five years by the nation's farmers, represent a drop in production since the 2017 census.

There are still enough melons to go around, and they can be found at Virginia farmstands and supermarkets during the summer season. For urban consumers searching grocery bins for a crowd-pleasing watermelon, a yellow belly may be an indication of ripeness.

And there are other visual clues at harvest, said Chris Drake of Sandy Point Farms in Southampton County.

"For watermelon that has stripes, its stripes will start to break, and there will be clear definition between the stripe and non-stripe," he said. "That will indicate maturity, though every variety is different."



Surry Community College will be offering an Auto Dealer Pre-License Initial course and an Auto Dealer License Renewal course at The Yadkin Center in August.

Auto Dealer Pre-License Initial, Renewal Courses set for August

Surry Community College will be holding an Auto Dealer Pre-Licensing course and an Auto Dealer License Renewal course that are required by the N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles.

The Auto Dealer Pre-License Initial course will be held Monday, August 26, and Tuesday, August 27, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at The Yadkin Center, 1001 College Drive, Yadkinville.

This course is designed to meet the 12-hour training requirement for individuals seeking an initial Used Motor Vehicle Dealers license. Tuition for the

course is \$146.

Surry Community College will also be holding an Auto Dealer License Renewal course on Wednesday, August 28, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at The Yadkin Center, 1001 College Drive, Yadkinville.

This N.C. Auto Dealer License Renewal class is offered for independent automotive dealers. Completion of this six-hour course meets the requirements for individuals renewing their Used Motor Vehicle Dealers License. Tuition is \$126.

For more information about the course or to register, contact Doug Underwood, Director of The Yadkin Center, at (336) 386-3584 or underwood@surry.edu.

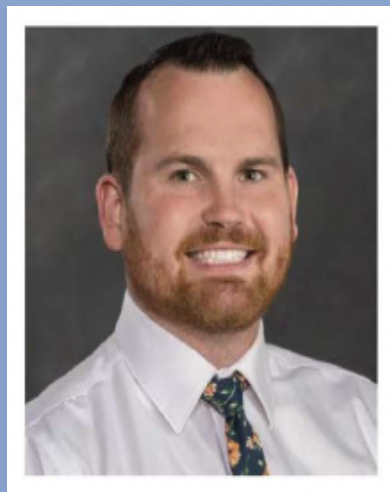
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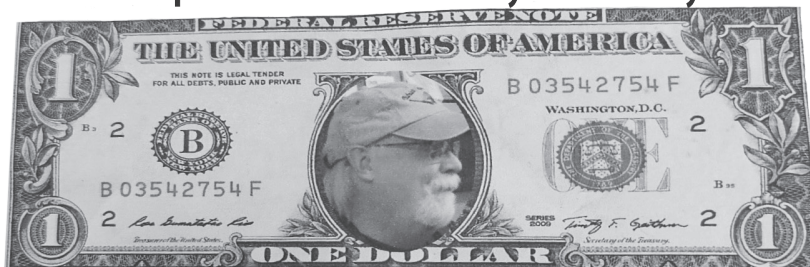
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Cloudy skies didn't keep community from National Night Out

By Pat Delaney

Despite clouds and possible rain, turnout was strong for this year's National Night Out at DeHart Park on August 6, as Patrick County turned

out in droves for the event that is designed to make neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office and Patrick County's Tourism Department sponsored the an-

nual event that also helps to foster and enhance the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement, and bring the community together for fun and fellowship.



Attendees had a chance to interact with those in law enforcement, first responders and local public service organizations.

Patrick County Sheriff's Capt. Eric O'Connell welcomed those who participated, as other officers and first responders worked to prepare food and help serve hotdogs and the fixings.



Music was provided by Michael Ray Fain.

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Keb' Mo'

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- Meet your neighbors
- Share a meal
- Volunteer
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