



The Planning Commission approved an amendment to the comprehensive plan’s policies on solar facilities at its meeting on Tuesday, March 18.

Commission approves solar policy amendment

By Taylor Boyd

The Patrick County Planning Commission approved an amendment to the comprehensive plan’s policies on solar facilities at its meeting on Tuesday, March 18.

According to the amendment, the Patrick County Board of Supervisors finds that the current solar policies in the county’s comprehensive plan do not align with its position that utility-scale solar is an incompatible land use.

The amendment states that while Patrick County does not currently have any utility-scale solar facilities subject to Virginia Code § 15.2-2232, recent interest and proposed projects have prompted county officials to reconsider the appropriate-

ness of this land use.

“Utility-scale solar facilities can have a significant impact on the landscape, wetlands, soil, viewsheds, and other natural and cultural resources located within the county and are generally incompatible with the rural character and land uses traditionally found within the county. Further, such facilities do not directly contribute to the local economy or provide jobs for the community over the long term,” the amendment states.

Based on these impacts, land use incompatibility, and negligible benefits, the amendment states that utility-scale solar facilities are not considered an appropriate land (See Commission p. 2)

Town council declines to rejoin VRS



The Stuart Town Council directed Town Manager Bryce Simmons to inform the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) that it does not accept the offered Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at its meeting on Wednesday, March 19.

By Taylor Boyd

The Stuart Town Council directed Town Manager Bryce Simmons to inform the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) that it does not accept the offered Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at its meeting on Wednesday, March 19.

The MOU states that to bring the town’s plan to a 100 percent funded status, including ongoing required contributions for current employees, additional payments totaling \$638,000 as of Jan. 1, 2025, would be required.

Over a three-year period, the cost would amount to \$20,000 per month.

Because of this expense, Simmons said he does not believe the town can afford to rejoin VRS.

“That’s so steep,” Council Member Erica Wade said.

The town first enrolled in VRS during the 1970s. However, in the 1980s, the then Town Council attempted to withdraw from the system but was unable to do so. As a result, the town has not actively participated in VRS since the 1980s.

Town Attorney Chris Corbett asked if that means town employees will never be part of VRS.

Simmons replied that he is unsure, adding that with the town’s ongoing projects, he anticipates having to tighten the reins on spending.

“I don’t foresee where the government is going to be handing out \$1.5 million checks to every county and town. I just don’t see it, and I can’t in good conscience put the town at financial risk like that. I just don’t feel good about it, and that’s at my (See Town Council p. 3)

NICW Mardi Gras Brawl 3 set for Saturday

By Taylor Boyd

The third annual National Independent Championship Wrestling (NICW) Mardi Gras Brawl will take place on Saturday, March 29, at the Stuart Rotary Building. Doors open at 6 p.m., with the first match beginning at 7 p.m.

Scott Rutter, of Rutter’s Martial Arts, said the event is held each year in memory of Kenny Pack, who wrestled for years as “The Machine” Ken Steel on the independent circuit.

“He was an assistant football coach at Patrick County High School (PCHS), so we always do this as a memorial show for him, an annual event every year for his memory,” he said.

Rutter said NICW prides itself on keeping the shows family-friendly—something Pack valued when

he started with the organization.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the PCHS girls’ basketball team.

“Every time we do a show, we try to give back to one of the athletic departments, the band, or whatever is in need at PCHS. This time, we’re doing it for the girls’ basketball team,” he said.

The show will feature seven matches, including a battle royal open to any wrestler who wants to participate.

“We may have 15 to 20, something like that. Whoever wins the battle royal will get an opportunity to challenge for a championship of their choosing within the organization,” Rutter said.

Scheduled matches include:

NICW Mid-Atlantic Heavyweight (See NICW p. 2)

Former students raise funds for Patrick Central’s historical marker

By Taylor Boyd

Former students of Patrick Central School, a segregated institution that served African American children in Patrick County, are raising funds to create a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) historical highway marker honoring the school.

Patrick Central School operated from 1952 until 1966, when desegregation took place. During its 14 years, about 600 students attended the school. Fourteen teachers and three principals also worked there.

Mary Sawyers, who is leading the fundraising effort, said she felt called to pursue the marker.

“Immediately it seemed everything just started falling into place,” she said.

At its March 10 meeting, the Patrick County Board of Supervisors approved supporting the application for a VDOT historical marker. Several former students spoke about the impact Patrick Central School had on them and their support for the marker.

Sawyers said the marker will cost \$3,000, and the appli-



Mary Sawyers was among those asking the county to support a resolution for a VDOT historical marker to be installed at Patrick Central School.

cation to VDOT is due by May 1.

While VDOT will have the final say on the text, the proposed inscription states:

“Patrick Central School opened in 1952 to provide public education for all African American students in Patrick County, first grade to twelfth grade. Prior to 1952, education for African American children ended at seventh grade and was provided in one- or two-room buildings or churches throughout Patrick County. The opening of Patrick Central brought together approximately 600 students, teachers, and administrative staff determined to make the new experience unforgettable for the students. For the first time in the education of African American students in Patrick County, students could participate in organized sports and oth-

(See Raise Funds p. 3)

Griffith: Government spending worse than expected

By Taylor Boyd

Ninth District Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Salem, discussed government efficiency, the Department of Education (DOE), Social Security, and other issues at a recent Patrick County Republican Committee meeting.

Government Spending and Efficiency

Griffith said wasteful spending and unaccounted funds are worse than previously thought.

Griffith said he recently spoke to someone who expressed concern about the Department of Defense being unable to complete an audit.

“I’m perfectly fine accepting an audit that says, ‘This stuff is black ops, and you can’t see it.’ It’s fine, I don’t need to know everything, but you ought to be able to say the money’s here, the money’s here, the money’s here. Right now, we don’t know where our money’s going,” Griffith said.

Discussing the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Griffith



Ninth District Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Salem, discussed government efficiency, the Department of Education, and Social Security (Contributed by Lynne Bogle).

said some funding is sometimes misdirected to places taxpayers would never approve of while others support projects that actually help — which he believes would win approval from taxpayers.

As one example of the latter, Griffith recalled that three years ago, he visited a Kenyan refugee camp, where USAID had created a nutrient-rich peanut butter-like food for malnourished children.

“If they got a kid there who was on the verge of starvation before the organs started to shut down, they could suck on this tube and get this peanut butter stuff out. They could turn that kid’s situation around in (See Griffith p.3)

Commission

(cont. from page 1)

use in the county and “should therefore be prohibited, with the location, character, and extent of proposed facilities being deemed not substantially in accord with this comprehensive plan.”

This policy does not apply to solar facilities other than utility-scale projects, such as accessory solar installations associated with agricultural, residential, commercial, or industrial uses, where generated electricity is primarily used on-site or net-metered to offset on-site electricity consumption.

Commission member Michael Tatum expressed concerns that the amendment does not address two previously approved utility-scale solar projects.

The Board of Supervisors approved a solar siting agreement with Fairystone Solar LLC, a subsidiary of Energix Renewables, in March 2024. The project, planned for Commerce Street in Stuart, was canceled in August 2024 due to interconnection issues but could be revived in the future.

Another proposal for a solar farm in Woolwine by Moscato LLC, also a subsidiary of Energix, was approved by the Planning Commission in February 2024 but has not yet been considered by the Board of Supervisors.

“We got to deal with those, and it’s not dealt with in this resolution,” Tatum said.

Michael Zehner, director of planning and community development programs for Berkley Group LLC, said the amendment cannot be applied retroactively.

“They’ve already gone through your process, they’ve received the approvals. It’s a conversation for the county attorney—I believe you couldn’t retroactively apply a policy or procedure or regulations that’s already been through a process,” he said.

Attending via Zoom, Zehner said the comprehensive plan amendment allows the commission to review—and presumably reject—future applications.

“But with these folks that are grandfathered in, it’s a contradiction. We contradict our own policy by grandfathering these guys in,” Tatum said.

Zehner responded that this situation is common.

Tatum warned that legal challenges could arise on both sides.

“No, sir. I don’t believe so because you can always amend your policy and amend your regulations, and there’s projects that

have vested permits and approvals before you do that. As long as you’re not proceeding to take away their rights to what they have, then I don’t see what the liability is,” Zehner said.

If the projects were lawfully approved with no expiration date on their approvals, Zehner said they could proceed regardless of changes to the comprehensive plan.

While the commission cannot alter the two previously approved projects, commission member Ed Pool suggested that the Board of Supervisors or the county administrator notify the solar company that it has a 30- or 60-day deadline to inform the county whether it intends to proceed with the project. If the company fails to respond or declines to continue, the county could cancel the project.

“That can end up in a smidge of a legal argument, but so be it. Because what you’re (Tatum) wanting to do is what I want to do—shut the door on those things,” Pool said, adding that a formal written notice of withdrawal is necessary.

Tatum asked whether the Board of Supervisors has the authority to reach out and demand a response from the solar company.

Zehner recommended consulting the county attorney for legal guidance on how to proceed.

The amendment now moves to the Patrick County Board of Supervisors for approval.

The Planning Commission also discussed a proposed utility-scale solar facility ordinance, which would establish procedures for evaluating solar projects as public use facilities. The ordinance would guide the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in assessing applications when applicable.

When reviewing the draft ordinance, Pool noted the absence of provisions on penalties, financial requirements, long-term liabilities, bonding, or insurance for utility-scale solar companies.

“Why is that?” he asked Zehner.

Since the county does not have zoning regulations, Zehner said certain requirements cannot be mandated in the ordinance.

“This document, this ordinance, cannot necessarily be a regulatory document, so my expectation and recommendation would be that all of those items would be expected and re-

quired of any siting agreement negotiation,” he said.

Zehner explained that since the comprehensive plan already states that no project would be acceptable, there is an assumption that no application would reach the negotiation stage. However, if a project were to be approved—or if the Board of Supervisors overturned a commission denial—then those financial and regulatory concerns could be addressed in the siting agreement negotiations.

Tatum agreed with Pool, saying the ordinance should make clear “the penalty for being stupid.”

Zehner suggested that if the ordinance is adopted, the county should develop guidance or an FAQ outlining expectations for siting agreements rather than including regulatory language in the ordinance itself.

“That it not be included within the ordinance because it can be regulatory in nature since it’s not a zoning ordinance, but there be guidance adopted—a policy adopted—for the supervisors when they’re negotiating a siting agreement as to what items need to be addressed within that,” he said.

Pool emphasized that financial commitments should be addressed upfront before any county resources are expended.

“Definitely, the financial commitments need to be put in place. It needs to be known upfront, they certainly need to be known before any resources of the county are expended. A five-renewable bond’s a nonstarter—that’s an escape valve, you should know that. The only way to pull the long-term liability to the frontside is to confirm an irrevocable letter of credit. Anything less than that just does not fly,” he said.

Zehner reiterated that the only way the county can impose such requirements is through the siting agreement.

“You have no other ability to impose those as conditions on a project but through the siting agreement, which is all subject to negotiation. The county has to agree to it, the applicant has to agree to it, and there may be some deal breakers for the county that result in an inability to enter into a siting agreement, and then the project doesn’t go forward. But unfortunately, that’s the nature of this situation because you don’t have the regulatory authority,” he said.

NICW

(cont. from page 1)



MARDI GRAS BRAWL 3

NICW WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

USA vs. AXIS OF EVIL

SCOTT LEE & TONY RAY vs. VIKTOR KRAUS & IVAN ROMANOV

MARDI GRAS BRAWL

Battle Royal

DANIEL CRAIG vs. ANTHONY COOLEY

CHASE BENNETT vs. KADILLAC JACKSON

CARD SUBJECT TO CHANGE

CONCESSIONS TO BENEFIT FCHS GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM

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National Independent Championship Wrestling

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The third annual National Independent Championship Wrestling (NICW) Mardi Gras Brawl is set for Saturday, March 29, at 7 p.m.

Championship: Larry Cooter vs. Robert Stanley vs. Bobby Yela

Daniel Craig vs. Anthony Cooley

Chase Bennett vs. Kadillac Jackson

Other wrestlers scheduled to appear include Kasper O’Neal, Ace Englund, Scorpion Jr., Daniel Ocean, and The Black Scorpion.

The main event will be a title-on-a-pole match for the vacant NICW World Tag Team Championship, featuring USA Tony Ray and “The Dragon” Scott Lee vs. “The Axis of Evil” Viktor Kraus and Ivan Romanov.

“So, the titles will go up on a pole, and whoever can climb and get the belts will be the new champions because the titles are vacant—there’s not a champion right now,” Rutter said.

During the event,

referee Ric Petty, better known locally as Joel Cockram, will be inducted into the NICW Hall of Fame.

“He’s very well-known, mainly out of Floyd. He refereed on our independent circuit for over 25 years, so he’s very well-known in wrestling. He passed away about a month or so ago, and we’re recognizing him. His family will be there, and we’ll be inducting him into our Hall of Fame,” Rutter said.

Rutter expects attendance to reach 200 to 250 people, though

he hopes for a sellout.

Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door for adults; \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door for children under 12. Children under 5 are admitted for free.

Advance tickets are available at Stagecoach on Main and Little Caesars.

The event is sponsored by Rutter’s Martial Arts, Lawless Welding, and Impressive Prints & Designs.

For more information, visit Facebook.com/NationalIndependentChampionshipWrestling.

Pets of the Week



This colorful girl was found on Poor House Creek Road in Stuart. Neutered male Pit approximately 2 years old, such a sweetie! They are both so deserving of a loving home.

Free spay/neuter and rabies vaccinations. Call the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter at (276) 694-6259, visit the shelter or their Facebook page, to find information about these and other available pets in need of a forever

home. Adoption fees are \$10 and include spay/neuter and rabies vaccination.

The Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League provides pet food assistance and information about low-cost spay/neuter services; contact blueridgeawl@gmail.com. We are also asking for live trap donations (have-a-heart type), even if they need some minor repairs.

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Town Council

(cont. from page 1)

own detriment,” Simmons said.

Council Member Dave Hoback agreed with Simmons.

“This is a perfect example of bad policy and bad decisions resulting in bad consequences. That was what happened 40 years ago when the people that were on council at the time voted to get out of VRS. So, I tend to think that the price is too steep at this point in time to get back in,” he said.

Hoback said he wants the town to move away from poor policy decisions, which is why it currently does not provide any kind of retirement vehicle for its employees.

Simmons noted that even if the town rejoined VRS, not all employees would be cov-

ered under the plan.

“I really feel pretty strongly that we need to look at some kind of retirement vehicle to support all our employees. There’s lots of them out there, and I think we could do that at far less cost,” Hoback said.

Simmons agreed.

“I can’t in good conscience face the employees and say, ‘Yeah, we’re going to spend all this money for me, and we’re sorry—that’s the rule.’ That doesn’t sit well with me, and I don’t think it’s going to sit well with anybody that looks at that. I just can’t do it. I don’t feel good about it, and I don’t want to,” Simmons said.

In other matters, the council:

- *Scheduled a budget meeting for Wednesday, April 9, at 6 p.m.
- *Discussed the process of removing fluoride from the town’s water.
- *Reviewed the need for a strategic plan and decided that each council member should bring a list of five priorities to the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- *Approved a resolution from the Tobacco Commission.
- *Received updates on public works.
- *Discussed town policy.
- *Reviewed plans for the Wine & Beer Festival on Saturday, April 5.
- *Approved meeting minutes.
- *Paid outstanding bills.

Raise Funds

(cont. from page 1)

er school-based organizations. The consolidation was a source of cohesiveness and a strong sense of pride among students and teachers. However, 14 years later, following the Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 and the desegregation of public schools in Patrick County, Patrick Central School closed in 1966. Today, for alumni, its structure still evokes feelings of pride, sadness, success, and disappointment, but also hope that future generations of African American children will always have a reminder of this history.”

Memories of Patrick Central

While Sawyers never attended Patrick Central School herself, eight of her siblings did.

“The contribution of African American educators and Patrick Central students has always kept my interest. I have done three or four of their school reunions, and I manage the Facebook page, so I just loved that school. I missed it by one year—schools integrated one year before I started. So I really hate that I didn’t attend at least one year to experience that,” she said.

Gloria Conner Barber, a 1962 graduate, started at Patrick Central in the fifth grade.

She said the education she and other students received was communication-based, with students able to write and read in cursive by

the time they entered fifth grade.

“Kids can’t do that now. That’s why I think it’s important that we have a historical marker so that they will know that the Afro-Americans have come a long way in Patrick County. Out of that school we had doctors, we had lawyers, we had teachers, we had one that done all the autopsies in North Carolina, we had historians—we had good people turned out of that school,” Barber said.

She recalled that when it snowed, students did not stay home. Instead, they put on their boots, bus drivers put chains on their tires, and school continued as usual.

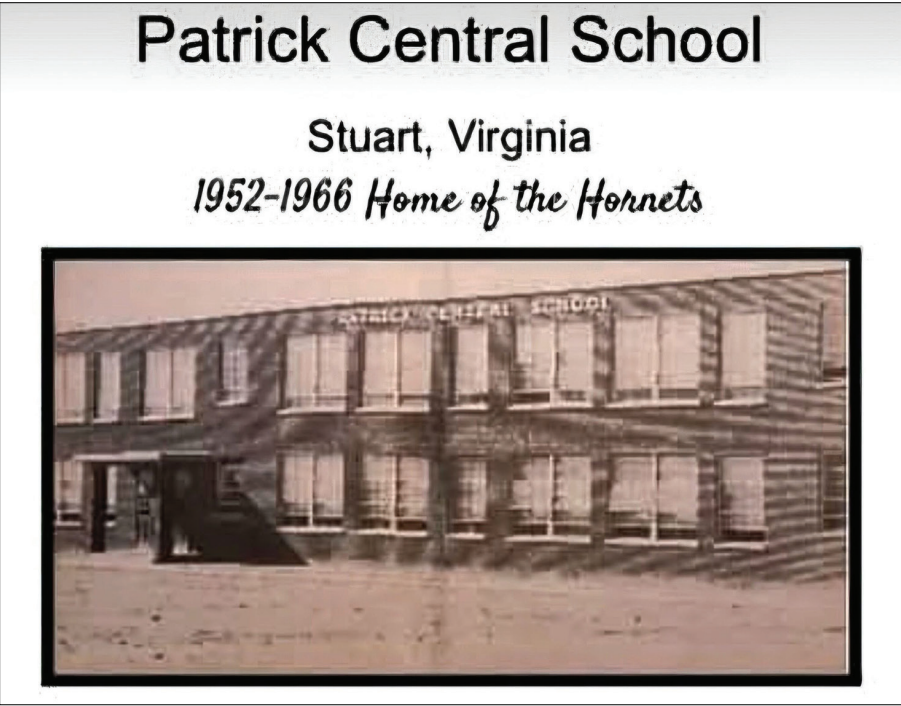
“I can remember times when we wouldn’t have water at the school for a couple of weeks at a time. Our parents packed our lunch and packed us a quart of water in a quart jar—we thought that was the most exciting thing in the world,” she said.

More Than Academics

In addition to the standard curriculum, Barber said students learned home economics skills such as cooking and sewing.

Male students also learned wood-working in the agriculture building across the yard from the school.

By eighth or ninth grade, students were allowed to help in the lunchroom by washing dishes and serving meals.



Patrick Central School operated from 1952 to 1966, and its mascot was the Hornets.

“That was a treat. We loved doing that ‘cause we felt important,” she said.

Barber said May Day was a major event at the school, with students spending the entire day outside.

“They had this pole you wrapped this paper around, and they played all these games, and it was just good, clean fun,” she said.

Another special occasion was the prom, which students helped decorate. Since the gym served as the venue for prom, basketball games, and the school cafeteria, Barber said that one room “was used for everything.”

How to Help

Those interested in donating to help fund the marker are asked to mail checks to Sawyers at:

340 North Franklin Road, Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030

For more information, visit Facebook.com/PatrickCentral-School-Stuart,Va.

Griffith

(cont. from page 1)



Del. Wren Williams, R-Stuart (left), and Ninth District Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Salem (right), spoke at the March 20 Patrick County Republican Committee meeting.

less than 24 hours,” he said.

“But making policy—and again, you could be on either side of the issue—having the taxpayers of the United States of America sending out, under our logo and our flag, policies related to the LBTG (Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Gay) issues... If you want to do that with your private money, I have no objection. That’s your right to make that decision,” he said.

However, he said taxpayer funds should not be allocated for such policies without proper debate in Congress.

“It’s just plain wrong, and we’re finding that with a lot of agencies. I got to tell you, it is a problem, and it’s going on in a lot of agencies,” Griffith said.

While he does not know when this practice began, he speculated it may date back to the Clinton or Bush administrations.

“It’s just that the agencies, and as Trump used to call them ‘the swamp,’ the elitists in Washington, D.C., have been hiding this money around for years. The only way to get to it is to kick in some doors and start finding out exactly what’s happening,” he said.

Griffith said he agrees with Elon Musk that mistakes will be made, but he believes this is a historic moment to push for change.

“I’m not going to stand by and let us settle for the status quo. I’m going to continue to fight, and I hope you all will join me in that fight,

fith said the recent requirement for in-person office visits has complicated the system in some cases.

“I just became Social Security eligible this year, and it took about six to eight weeks to get an appointment for a telephone interview with someone working from home,” he said.

While the appointment went smoothly, he noted there were interruptions.

“We had to stop a couple of times because the worker’s dogs were barking in the background,” he said.

Griffith said the return of in-person workers is essential.

“There’s absolutely no reason why I couldn’t go (to an office). Now, for somebody who’s got issues—maybe where they’re disabled—I agree we ought to have the ability to do tele-Social Security, just like I’m a big proponent of

telehealth,” he said.

However, Griffith said the system must be fixed first to allow flexibility for remote Social Security appointments.

“We got to get the system working again because it has not functioned well over the last—at least the last four years, but I would say even the last five, six, seven years,” he said.

Privatization as a Solution?

Griffith suggested partial privatization could improve efficiency.

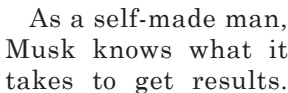
“If some of our folks would just realize—if you do one more finding of a document, one more check on the Social Security matter every day, our backlogs wouldn’t be nearly as great,” he said.

Griffith and Del. Wren Williams, R-Stuart, also spoke about solar energy, Medicaid, broadband expansion, and the latest legislative session.

Ararat couple to celebrate milestone anniversary



High school sweethearts and graduates of Patrick County High School, Ronald ‘Butch’ and Teresa Marshall, of Ararat, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on March 28.



Call the Abingdon office at (276) 525-1405, the Christiansburg office at (540) 381-5671, or email by visiting www.morgangriffith.house.gov with questions or comments.

This venture is being conducted in order to build and foster resilient connections throughout the county and surrounding community area. This is a great way to meet your neighbors while building food security in the area. “Our goal is to strengthen our community in the local area and the garden is a great place to do that. It’s a place that

Dr. Glenn Mollette is the author of Uncommon Sense. Available wherever books are sold.

Postmaster: send address changes to The Enterprise, P.O. Box 348, Stuart, VA 24171-0348. Subscription Rates: \$32 per year in Patrick County; \$42 per year in state, \$43 per year out of state. Single copies \$1.00.

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CHECK US OUT

Patrick Pioneers

Dr. Leonidas Camden Dickerson and Caroline Moore Dickerson
By Beverly Belcher Woody

Leonidas Camden Dickerson was born on a farm in Floyd County on April 19, 1869, to Burdine and Nancy Sowers Dickerson. Burdine served four years in the Confederate Army and was Captain of Company A, Fifth Virginia Infantry. He spent the last months of the war as a prisoner on Johnson’s Island. Upon his return home after the war, Burdine Dickerson managed the Shelton farm and served on the local school board.

Leonidas was the oldest of seven sons born to the couple, the others being George Worthington, an employee of the Norfolk & Western Railroad; Wade Hampton, a farmer and blacksmith on the Dickerson farm; Charles Edgar, an optician in Baltimore; Henry Ashby, a secret service man at Callaway, West Virginia ; James B., a merchant at Oak Hill, WV; and Lafayette Vance, who died in 1903. Leonidas’ sisters were Vada who married Charles Woolwine; Sonora Ann who married Harris Hylton; and Nancy Adeline who married Charles Thomas Spangler.

Leonidas Dickerson’s first teacher in Floyd County was Miss Florence Graham. His second teacher was John Webb Simmons, who became a well-known doctor in Martinsville. Leonidas was also under the tutelage of T. D. Sowers. After Leonidas graduated from Floyd High School, he taught school for six years, and when not engaged with his duties in the school room, he worked on the farm and cut timber. For two years he also held the office of Deputy United States Marshal. Leonidas began his medical education at the College of Virginia, at Richmond, and subsequently entered the University of the South, at Sewanee, Tennessee, where he graduated January 1, 1901, with the degree of Doctor of Medicine. During his senior year, he had begun his medical practice at Meadows of Dan and remained there after graduating until September 1901 when he moved his medical practice to the town of Stuart.

Dr. Dickerson was very athletic and fond of all outdoor sports. He was a proficient boxer and wrestler and played baseball and football in college. On October 15th, 1902, the young doctor married Miss Caroline (Carrie) Leigh Moore, the daughter of Judge John Rucker Moore and Sallie Lou Rucker Moore.

Dr. Dickerson and his wife Caroline’s first child, Audrey Lybrook,

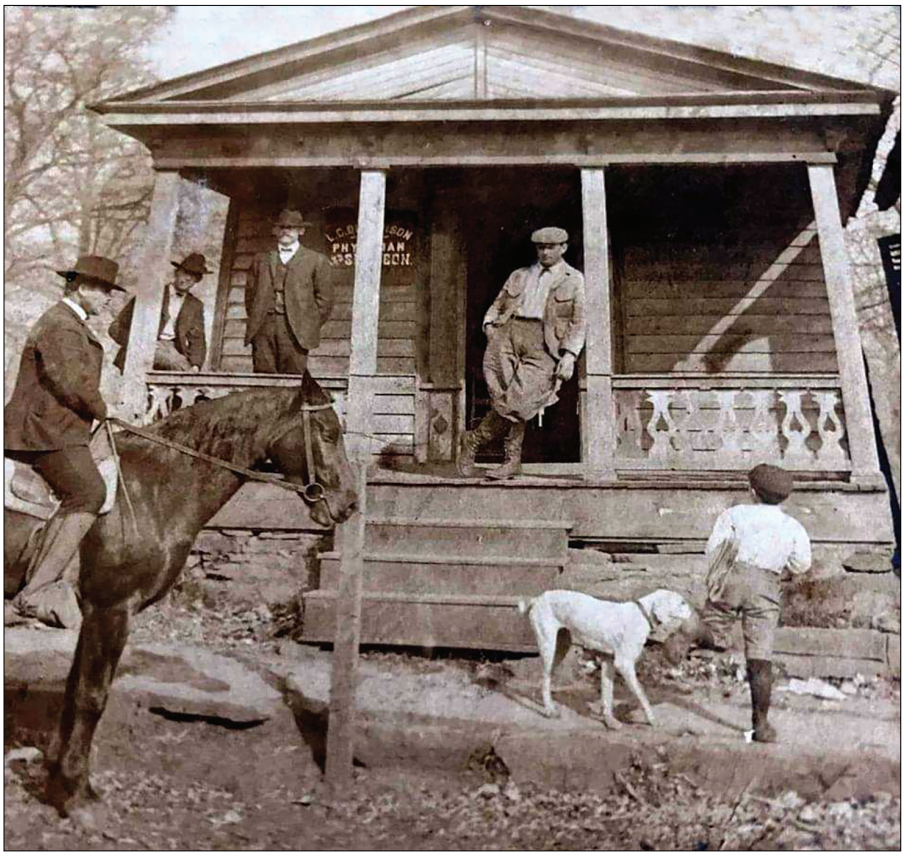
was born on the 23rd of July 1903. Audrey became a schoolteacher and married Jesse Guy Davis, who managed a commercial orchard and later taught school. The Dickerson’s second child, Vivian Moore Dickerson, was born on the 7th of March 1905. Vivian married Elbert Carmen Price of Roanoke, and the couple lived in Queens, New York for many years before returning home to Patrick County to retire.

Caroline and Dr. Dickerson’s third child was born on the 31st of January 1907 and only lived twelve days; the infant is buried at Stuart Town Cemetery. The couple’s fourth child, Nancy Sowers Dickerson, was born on the 12th of December 1908. Nancy married Dr. Lewis Raymond Semones, a Radford dentist.

Leonidas Camden Dickerson, Jr. was born on the 18th of October 1911. He joined the United States Navy and was stationed on the ill-fated Reuben James, the first U.S. Navy ship sunk by enemy action in World War II. According to nationalarchives.gov., the Navy destroyer sailed from Naval Station Argentia, Newfoundland, with four other destroyers, escorting eastbound Convoy HX 156. At dawn, on the 31st of October 1941, it was torpedoed near Iceland by German submarine U-552 commanded by Kapitänleutnant Erich Topp.

The Reuben James had positioned itself between an ammunition ship in the convoy and the known position of a German “wolfpack”, a group of submarines poised to attack the convoy. The destroyer was not flying the Ensign of the United States and was in the process of dropping depth charges on another U-boat when it was engaged. Reuben James was hit forward by a torpedo meant for a merchant ship and her entire bow was blown off when a magazine exploded. The bow sank immediately. The aft section floated for five minutes before going down. Of a crew of seven officers and 136 enlisted men plus one enlisted passenger, 100 were killed, leaving only 44 enlisted men and no officers who survived the attack. Leonidas Camden Dickerson, Jr. did not survive, he was thirty years old. An interesting trivia note: Woody Guthrie wrote a song about the sinking of the Reuben James and its’ crew.

The sixth child of Dr. and Mrs. Dickerson, John Rucker Dickerson, was born on the eighth of December 1917. When John was fourteen years old, he had a gangrenous appendix, contracted peritonitis, and died. I imagine



Dr. L.C. Dickerson Office in Stuart (Courtesy Jack Dickerson)

this was doubly sad for Dr. Dickerson when he was unable to save his own son. It is heartbreaking to think how many young people died unnecessarily before the availability of antibiotics in the 1940s.

The seventh and youngest child of the Dickersons, George Divers Dickerson, was born on the sixth of August 1919. George married Miss Nell Pace, served in WWII, and was the owner of Stuart Motors and later, general manager of Stanley Chevrolet Inc.

Dr. Leonidas Camden Dickerson, Sr. passed away at Stuart Hospital, Friday, May 22, 1931, at 12:30 o’clock, following an illness of two days’ duration. In addition to his professional duties, he was president of the Peoples Bank of Patrick. The following is an excerpt from his obituary: “Dr. Dickerson was fond of hunting with a good bird dog and growing game chickens at his beautiful little estate in Stuart. He was a Democrat and a member of the Knights of Pythias. He enjoyed a wide practice here and in adjoining counties, and the fruitage of his untiring labor was manifested by the love and esteem from those he came in contact with. One had only to witness the deep sorrow his passing brought to those in the humblest as well as the higher wakes of life to fully realize that he was a friend to all and that his labors for the good of humanity won him unlimited friends. Dr. Dickerson had suffered for a number of years with diabetes, and several years ago his condition was considered so critical for weeks that the outcome was very doubtful. He recovered sufficiently, howev-



Caroline Moore Dickerson (Courtesy Sara Dickerson Collins)

er, to resume his practice, and has been very active until last Thursday morning when a return of the old malady took such a grave turn from the first that no hope was held out for recovery.”

Caroline Moore Dickerson outlived her beloved husband, Dr. Leonidas C. Dickerson, Sr., by over forty-nine years, passing away at the age of ninety-nine in 1981. She was the oldest living member of Stuart Baptist Church at the time of her passing.

Thank you so much to Dr. and Mrs. Dickerson’s granddaughter, Sara Leigh Dickerson Collins, for helping with the article. Woody may be reached at rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com or (276) 682-9626.

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 Medicare Premium Change because I Sold Investment Property?

Dear Rusty: I have questions concerning the deduction of money from my Social Security benefit amount as relates to the sale of investment property. I am 66 years old and have been drawing Social Security since I turned 62. My wife is 56 and is a housewife and has no taxable income. Our income comes from our rental property and my Social Security benefit. I have decided to liquidate two of our properties - one was sold in December 2024, and one is in Escrow and is scheduled to close in March 2025.

My normal Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) has been running about \$30K-\$32K. However, last year with the sale of the property I will receive a long-term capital gain profit of about \$255K. I did a rough calculation on what my AGI will be for 2024, and it looks to be about \$318K. How will this affect my Social Security benefit, and will it have an effect on the amount I pay for my Part B Medicare Plan going forward? I have a Medicare Advantage plan.

My next question is about 2025 (after the next property closes and I file taxes), my AGI with the long-term capital gain profit could be between \$700k-\$800K. How will this affect my benefits going forward? *Signed: Prudent*

Investor

Dear Prudent Investor: Actually, the GROSS amount of your Social Security benefit will not be affected by these transactions, but the NET amount of your SS benefit payment will change due to a provision known as “IRMAA” (Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount). IRMAA affects the Medicare premiums you pay from your Social Security benefit, and a higher Medicare premium will result in a lower net Social Security payment. Here’s how this will work for you:

Your Medicare premiums each year (typically for Medicare Part B and Part D) are determined by looking at your “Modified Adjusted Gross Income,” or “MAGI”, from two years prior (MAGI is your normal AGI plus any non-taxable interest you may have had). Since the property you sold in 2024 will be reflected as part of your 2024 income, IRMAA will cause your 2026 Medicare premiums to be higher than the standard monthly 2026 amount. How much higher depends on how much you exceed the income level for your IRS filing status. Using 2025 rules, if you file as Married/jointly and your taxable income (MAGI) is more than \$212,000 but less than \$334,000 then, instead of paying the standard 2026 monthly Part B premium, you’ll each pay \$370 per month for Medicare Part B (and likely a supplemental amount of \$35.30 if your Advantage plan includes prescription drug coverage).

Your Medicare premiums are recalculated every year (again based on income from

two years prior). Thus, in 2027, IRMAA will also affect your Medicare premiums and your net Social Security payment because of your 2025 real estate transaction. If your MAGI in 2025 will be over \$750,000, then IRMAA will increase each of your 2027 Medicare Part B premiums to \$638.90 (and likely also add a supplement of \$85.80 per month each to your Medicare Advantage premium for prescription drug coverage).

The good news is in 2028 all of this will be behind you and your Medicare premiums will revert to whatever the standard monthly premiums are for that year (because your income levels thereafter will presumably be below the then-IRMAA thresholds).

For reference, here is a link to Medicare’s information on the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount, or “IRMAA.”

<https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/factsheets/2025-medicare-parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles>

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

Crossing the Lines

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

Martinsville property owners concerned over rising assessments

A recent citywide property reassessment has left many Martinsville homeowners concerned over rising tax bills, as some properties saw value increases in the tens of thousands of dollars. The issue was discussed during the Martinsville City Council meeting on March 13, where City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides explained the reassessment process and how it affects tax rates.

While some residents celebrated increased home equity, others worried about affording the higher taxes that could follow. Ferrell-Benavides emphasized that the city has no control over the reassessment process but does determine the property tax rate per \$100 of assessed value. Currently, residents pay \$0.77 per \$100. The council



Police Chief Robert Fincher presented the 2024 crime statistics.

sets the final rate to fund city operations. “The rate has remained consistent for last year and the year before,” Ferrell-Benavides said. Council member Julian Mei also addressed the issue, noting that his home’s value had skyrocketed as well. Residents concerned about their reassessments were encouraged to con-

tact the Commissioner of Revenue before the March 31 deadline to challenge their property values. “There is a process where if you see your set rate and do not agree with it, you can go to her office and work with her, and she will help you understand how you can challenge those values,” Ferrell-Benavides explained.

Commission moves forward on controversial rezoning request



Holly Kozelsky presented photos, recordings and letters as evidence of issues with the garage.

The Henry County Planning Commission voted to recommend rezoning a property in the Reed Creek District for commercial use, despite strong opposition from nearby and other residents. The final decision now rests with the Board of Supervisors. The property, located at 3975 Chatham Road, is owned by Kenneth Lewis, who has allowed the building to be used as a garage without a license. Lewis requested a zoning change from Agricultural District A-1 to Commercial to continue using the site as an automobile repair garage.

“When do you find out that you weren’t supposed to be there,” Paul Setliff, commission member, asked about the current garage operation. Lewis said that he didn’t realize the zoning wasn’t correct. The location had lost its commercial status “It’s been without a valid license there without a valid business there for more than two years.” The garage has only been in operation for six months. “It was built as a body shop and used as such from the early 1970s into the late 80s or early 90s,” said Lee Clark, the county’s di-

rector of Planning and Zoning. The property was also used as a sheet metal shop and as a car lot, before becoming personal vehicle storage with an attached insurance office. While some cited its long auto-related history, opponents contended noise, late-night activity, and safety concerns while presenting their reasons to deny the request. “The people that are in there now don’t show up until dark—five or six—and are there all night,” one person said, explaining that the noise disrupts his sleep.

City council vote sparks conflict among members

A March 17 Martinsville City Council vote and a dispute about a draft meeting record have sparked controversy, with council members clashing over transparency, procedure, and the handling of the city manager’s salary negotiations. In a March 18 email sent to all members of council, City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides and City Attorney Stephen V. Durbin, council member Aaron Rawls wrote, “I received an update that Council conducted an unannounced open session last night regarding the city manager’s employment contract. It looks to me like a bizarre motion was made but no vote recorded. While I know some of you are eager to avoid public

attention and accountability for this, we need to pause and handle the matter responsibly.” Rawls added that “not even a year ago, we settled a case resulting from Council malfeasance in which a deliberately hasty and reckless contract with false employment information became the subject of a ~million dollar claim against our city. Ultimately, it cost our people \$200,000 (\$40 per household) to settle that. We all know who did what in this case, which is why I’m concerned that Council is right back on the ... road of irresponsible behavior, hiding actions from and lying to our people, and doing sneaky things with their money.”

Two designs for Baldwin Park upgrades under consideration

Plans to renovate Baldwin Park, including new fitness upgrades, were presented during a recent Martinsville City Council work session. Council members reviewed two proposed layouts, each offering a different vision for the design of Baldwin Park. The project is part of the Foothills of the Blue Ridge Outdoor Recreation Plan, a 15-year regional initiative that includes Martinsville, Henry and Patrick counties. Baldwin Park plays a significant role in the plan, with much of the funding for the project from grants awarded by the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission. The design is being developed by Destination by Design, a firm based in Boone, North Carolina.

The first plan includes a paved driveway and sidewalk connection, two paved parking lots, a ¼-mile surface loop, converts the existing tennis courts into basketball



Greg Maggard gives information on the installation of the fitness pad at Baldwin Park.

courts, a stage, and a space for art exhibits or food trucks, transforming the park into an event space. “One thing we heard from you all, as well as others, was that access to get down to the field was kind of difficult,” said Tim Johnson, the design firm’s director of Outdoor Recreation Planning. The first plan includes a driveway and sidewalk leading into the middle

of the field. “This is a very simple design; we are not doing a whole lot of stuff.” The second plan features a single parking lot near the courts, with an additional overflow parking area in the field. “We have an off-street parking lot for 22 cars with a drive aisle,” Johnson said. The basketball court in this plan is rotated sideways, with a playground next to it.

Outside agencies submit budget requests

Several local non-profit agencies submitted budget requests to the Martinsville City Council on March 18. Requests came from organizations including the Martinsville-Henry County SPCA, Piedmont Arts, Warming Shelter, and Salvation Army. Each group provided an overview of its mission before presenting its funding request. The Chamber’s Partnership for Economic Growth (C-PEG) requested \$40,000, an increase of \$12,500 from previous years. The Warming Center requested \$35,000, the same amount as last year, and mentioned the possibility of adding a cooling shelter



Charisse Hairston requested funding on behalf of FAHI to upgrade its security system.

during the summer. The Fayette Area Historical Initiative (FAHI) requested \$7,500 to accommodate its growing number of visitors and to invest in a recom-

mended new security system. The SPCA, which serves more than 1,400 animals annually, requested \$20,000, an increase of \$5,000 from last year.



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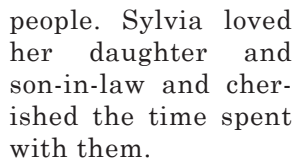
Hollywood Cinema
beside Walmart
Martinsville 276-656-3456

Bizzie Waldale Dalton

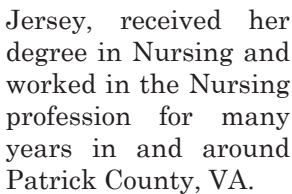
Mrs. Barbara Lee Griffith Nowlin departed this life to be with Jesus on March 17, 2025. She was born on August 23, 1927, in Patrick County to the late Edward Griffith and Grace Lee Staples Griffith. She was preceded in death by her husband of 48 years Douglas Mackarthur Nowlin, and by two brothers, William Jackson Griffith and Lawrence Griffith.

At an early age, she joined First Christian Church DOC in Stuart, VA and also attended New Hope Baptist Church in Stuart, VA. She moved to NJ at the age of 9 and completed her education there. She moved between NJ and Virginia several times with her family.

Barbara went to Rutgers University in New



Barbara Lee Griffith Nowlin



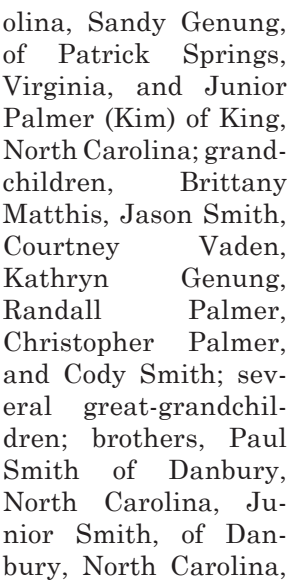
She was proficient in piano and was the pianist for several churches in and around Patrick County.

Barbara worked with former Attorney General Mary Sue Terry on her campaign to become governor. She was also secretary of the Stuart chapter of the NAACP.

Barbara is survived by one brother, George Oliver Griffith and wife, Julia Griffith of Maryland; nieces, Dr. Patricia G. Foley and husband, David Foley of Stuart, VA, Kimberly Middleton and husband, Theodore Middleton of Maryland, William Russell Griffith of New Jersey, Michael Griffith and wife, Denise Griffith of New Jersey, Gregory Griffith of New Jersey; special cousins, Ollie Mae Spencer, Lucy Moore and husband, Michael Moore; Marjorie Nowlin-Hairston and husband, John "Sonny" Hairston, Judy Rucker, Frank Nowlin and wife, Wanda Nowlin; and sisters-in-law, Stella Hairston and husband, James Hairston, Janice Nowlin, Ann Watlington, Sandra Nowlin, and many other family and friends too numerous to mention.

Funeral Services will be held at Moody's Funeral Home in Stuart on Saturday, March 22, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. with Rev. Douglas Scales presiding and Rev. Richard Spencer eulogizing. Burial will immediately follow in the Loggins Family Cemetery. The wake will be held one half hour prior to the service on Saturday afternoon at the funeral home. Online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Mrs. Dalton is survived by her children, Patricia Williams of Stuart, Virginia, Bob Smith (Tonya) of Sandy Ridge, North Car-

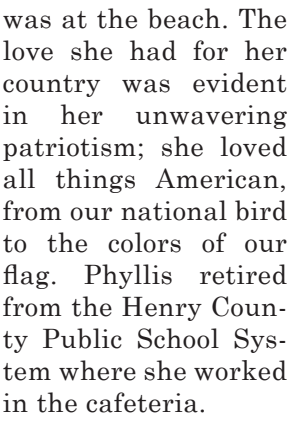


olina, Sandy Genung, of Patrick Springs, Virginia, and Junior Palmer (Kim) of King, North Carolina; grandchildren, Brittany Matthis, Jason Smith, Courtney Vaden, Kathryn Genung, Randall Palmer, Christopher Palmer, and Cody Smith; several great-grandchildren; brothers, Paul Smith of Danbury, North Carolina, Junior Smith, of Danbury, North Carolina,

Jerry Smith of Walnut Cove, North Carolina; Pee-Wee Smith of Tennessee; a sister, Nancy Wilson of Mt. Airy, North Carolina; and several nieces and nephews.

The funeral service for Mrs. Dalton will be held Sunday, March 23, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at Moody Funeral Home with Pastor Teddy Hiatt officiating. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service at the funeral home. The burial will follow in Church of Christ Cemetery. Flowers will be accepted, or memorial donations may be made to Wayside Church, c/o Sherry Niston, 3520 Wayside Road, Stuart, VA, 2417. Online condolences may be made by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Phyllis Ann Thacker, 80, of Ridgeway, Virginia, passed away Saturday, March 15, 2025. She was born July 15, 1944, in Patrick County to the late Samuel Grant Hughes and Edna Light Hughes.



was at the beach. The love she had for her country was evident in her unwavering patriotism; she loved all things American, from our national bird to the colors of our flag. Phyllis retired from the Henry County Public School System where she worked in the cafeteria.

She is survived by her husband, Ronnie F. Thacker; daughter,

Marsha Davis (Mark); son, Kevin F. Thacker (Rebekah); sisters, Verna Johnston, Judy Morrison; grandchildren, Christian Davis (Angela), Rebecca Davis Lumpkin (Nick), Madison Davis Bruce (Tristan), and Samuel Davis.

The funeral will be held Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 2:00 PM at Wright Funeral Service Chapel with Elder Kenny Bowles officiating. Interment will follow at Mt. View Cemetery. A visitation will be held one hour prior to the service.

Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is serving the family. Online condolences may be made at www.wrightfuneralservices.net.

Residents living in and around the Stuart, Virginia can learn about their risks for cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, and other chronic, serious conditions with afford-

able screenings by Life Line Screening. John D Hooker Memorial Building will host this community event on 4/8/2025. The site is located at 420 Woodland Drive in Stuart.

Screenings can check for:

The level of plaque buildup in your arteries, related to risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke and overall vascular health.

HDL and LDL Cholesterol levels

Diabetes risk
Kidney and thyroid
function, and more
Screenings are af-
fordable and conve-
nient. Free parking
is also available.
Special package
pricing starts at
\$159, but consultants
will work with you to
create a package that
is right for you based
on your age and risk
factors. Call 1-877-
237-1287 or visit our
website at [www.life-
linescreening.com](http://www.life-linescreening.com).
Pre-registration is
required.

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PATRICK PULPITS

Love Intentionally

By Dr. Evonne Wimbush
Fresh Harvest
Christian Church
(D.O.C.)

We have all heard at one point in time or another people confessing that they grew to love their spouses or that it was love at first sight. Most, if not all of us, have heard folks confess that “it just happened. I did not mean to....” There are also sayings that “Intentional love is conscious love. It is a commitment to love no matter what. Love is not just about what you feel, but what you choose to do.”

When God sent his son to earth to show the world His power and authority, he knew what Jesus’s fate was going to be, the ridicule, the torture, the pain, and suffering; yet, he made the choice to send His only begotten son because He intentionally loved us. John 3:16 KJV, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” He did not want to see us lost. He did not want us to be separated from Him. He was committed to loving us no matter what.

Jesus intentionally loved us just as did His Father. He loved us as he endured the pain and agony on Calvary’s cross. He intentionally loved us as he asked Father God to forgive his persecutors, the soldiers, naysayers, and unbelievers: “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). He intentionally loved us when he stood up against oppression, poverty, and sin. He intentionally loved us when he freely gave up His life. John 10:18 NLT, “No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily, For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again.” He intentionally loved us when He promised that although He had to return to the Father he would send one that would be with us forever, a Comforter. The Comforter who would come and dwell within us. The Comforter that would always be with us, John 15:26.

How do we measure up on our intentional love meter?

Do we love others despite how they treat us? Do we intentionally forgive them? Do we find it hard to intentionally love? Do we find it difficult to forgive and sacrifice ourselves for others? Do we find it hard to model Christ? Of course! I think the Apostle Paul made it plain when he was speaking to the people of Corinth, “And do everything in love” (Corinthians 16:14 NLT).

As Believers, we are commanded to love one another. In the King James version alone, the word “love” can be found 310 times. I would say this word is significantly important. Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (John 13:34 KJV). We love because God first loved us (1 John 4:19). Because he loved us, we can love others. We can love and do so intentionally.

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BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. Is the book of Romans (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From 2 Chronicles 14, where was Abijah buried? *City of David, Jerusalem, City of Gath, Nazareth*
3. According to Numbers 33, how old was Aaron when he died? *100, 113, 123, 132*
4. Which of these sons of

Jesse did not go into battle with Saul? *Eliab, David, Abinadab, Shimea*

5. From 2 Kings, who was Elijah’s successor? *Solomon, Elisha, Nimshi, Nimrod*

6. Which of Saul’s daughters loved David? *Merab, Michal, Cornelius, Paulus*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) City of David, 3) 123, 4) David, 5) Elisha, 6) Michal

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Meadows of Dan, Virginia
Rev. Tommy Gosnell
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Sunday School 10 am
Worship Services 11 am

Risen Lord Catholic Church
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Stuart
(actually in Patrick Springs)
276.236.7814
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Mass Schedule
Sundays at 8:30 a.m.
Reconciliation
Sundays 7:45 - 8:15 a.m.

Patrick Springs Pentecostal Holiness
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Sunday School for all ages 9:45 am
Wednesdays
Community Meal & Service 6:00 pm
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www.stuartbaptist.org
9:45 Sunday School
11:00 Worship Service
office@stuartbaptist.org

Stuart Seventh-Day Adventist Church
220 Patrick Avenue, PO Box 1078, Stuart, VA 24171
276-694-7677 • www.stuartva.adventistchurch.org
SATURDAY SERVICES:
Sabbath School - 9:20; Worship 11:00 a.m.
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(276) 694-3092 OR (276) 732-4993
MARTHA.CHANEY@PATRICK.K12.VA.US

Super Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Pleased
- 5 Rocker
- 9 Helper for Frankenstein
- 13 Jumped ship
- 19 Member of a canine unit
- 21 Nada
- 22 Remove adhesive strips from
- 23 Start of a riddle
- 25 Nonstudent resident of a college city
- 26 Microsoft Word creations, informally
- 27 Regret a lot
- 28 First-time fathers
- 30 Riddle, part 2
- 36 Prego competitor
- 37 — -mo
- 38 Tiny, informally
- 39 Manner
- 40 Tavern spigot
- 43 In addition
- 47 Largest known asteroid
- 48 Riddle, part 3
- 53 Sch. near Harvard
- 54 Disposed (of)
- 55 Actor Sharif
- 56 Nero's 2,001
- 57 Fearful
- 58 Bro relative
- 59 — orange (inedible fruit)
- 61 Smidgen
- 63 "POV"
- 65 Huck Finn's floater
- 67 Bandleader
- 68 Riddle, part 4
- 71 Broiling bar
- 75 Lane of the Daily Planet
- 77 Nintendo console
- 78 Tyrant Amin
- 79 Tree of the pine family
- 80 "— a deal!"
- 83 — -chic fashion
- 85 Old horror star Chaney
- 87 Prefix with Chinese
- 89 Island guitar, for short
- 90 Pro-firearm org.
- 91 Riddle, part 5
- 95 Joust weapon
- 97 Pencil add-on
- 98 Martial arts teacher
- 99 Italian wine city
- 100 Delhi dress
- 102 Org. for the Ravens, but not the Falcons
- 105 Lock lips with
- 106 End of the riddle
- 113 Conditionally free prisoner
- 114 Letters before gees
- 115 Maui feast
- 116 Not endless
- 117 Riddle's answer
- 124 12-step support group
- 125 Chocolate-and-caramel candy
- 126 Talus
- 127 Arid expanse
- 128 Plumlike fruit
- 129 Hit with a stun gun
- 130 Brainstorm
- 1 Lump in the throat
- 8 Yolked thing
- 9 Rack up
- 10 Thick and sticky
- 11 Yoko from Tokyo
- 12 Mended, as a sweater
- 13 "How come, though?"
- 14 Battery end
- 15 "I'm the culprit"
- 16 Valleys, plateaus and canyons
- 17 "Attack of the Clones," vis-à-vis "Star Wars"
- 18 Actress Ruby
- 20 Part of UPC
- 24 Pooch's bark
- 29 D.C. hrs.
- 30 General discomfort
- 31 Schedules
- 32 Responsibility
- 33 "Our Gang" novelist Philip
- 34 God, in Madrid
- 35 Relaxes
- 36 Musket-loading tool
- 41 Healing plant
- 42 Pug or peke alternative
- 44 — -pah-pah
- 45 Offensively self-assertive
- 46 African antelope
- 47 Kitchen VIP
- 49 "Rocky and Bullwinkle"
- 50 Slate-colored
- 51 Delta, for one
- 52 Big name in big computers
- 60 Street poet
- 62 Dawn drops
- 64 Lanka lead-in
- 66 Gp. often flagging bags
- 68 Celine
- 69 — Wafers
- 70 Actress
- 72 Old German kingdom
- 73 Most disgusting
- 74 Student's Ph.D. paper
- 76 Certain wind instrument
- 79 Ear part
- 80 Wife's sibling, e.g.
- 81 Rubbish heap
- 82 Hot California winds
- 84 Listens to by chance
- 86 LA-to-IN dir.
- 88 Hosp.
- 92 "Pics — didn't happen!"
- 93 — II (Gillette razor)
- 94 Egyptian cross
- 96 Topaz quartz
- 100 Unspoken
- 101 Get riper
- 103 Entertainer Lola
- 104 Makes heavy, dull sounds
- 107 Auto engine
- 108 Mello — (soft drink)
- 109 Tale — (sob story)
- 110 Troop support gp.
- 112 Ditty
- 116 Craze
- 118 Cyber-guffaw
- 119 Kit — (candy bar)
- 120 Kyoto sash
- 121 Pea holder
- 122 Suffix with meth- or prop-
- 123 In-favor vote

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35

36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74

75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130

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Home & office Cleaners Wanted - \$630/ Weekly Cleaning Position: Available Working Days: Mon-Fri Time Schedule: 11 AM - 2 PM Minimum Requirement Email: styleharry054@gmail.com

Patrick County Senior Services Driver
STEP, Inc, a multifaceted community action agency, is seeking a part-time, 20-25 hours per week, Senior Services Driver in Patrick County. The Senior Services Driver will be responsible for transporting senior citizens to and from various locations. This position will also be responsible for delivering meals to the homes of the program participants.

Qualifications: High School Diploma, experience driving a large passenger van or bus, knowledge of senior services, good communication skills and excellent driving record required. Pay rate will be \$13.50 per hour. Qualified applicants may apply at Apply Here (https://apply.stepincva.com/?positions=Patrick+County+Senior+Services+Driver) STEP, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

The County of Patrick is accepting applications from qualified applicants for a Solid Waste Transfer Station Attendant. A high school diploma or GED is required. Completion of training and testing to obtain the DPOR Waste Management Operator license is required following hire. Applicants must be willing to submit to a drug screen and background check.

Duties of the position will include, but are not limited to, customer assistance, operation of scales, loading trailers, and facility maintenance. The preferred candidate must be capable of performing manual labor, possess good interpersonal skills, and be able to communicate effectively with the public. Basic math, computer, and clerical skills to prepare customer tickets and perform record keeping are required. This is a full-time position with an annual starting salary of \$31,200 and benefits in excess of \$15,000 annually, which include vacation and sick leave, life insurance, retirement, and health insurance. Hours will be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday with rotating Saturday hours. Evening, weekend, holiday, and flexible/irregular work schedules may be required. A complete job description and employment application are available at https://www.co.patrick.va.us/Jobs.

aspx. Applicants must submit a Patrick County employment application to be considered for the position. The position will remain open until filled. The County of Patrick is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, or age.

LAND FOR SALE

Small parcel of land for sale @ 586 Mount Calvary Church Rd, Stuart, VA 24171. If interested, please call (276) 694-2842 between 10AM and 4PM

FOR SALE

PSS-300 Pride electric wheelchair (may need batteries). \$200 or best offer. Folding hitch cargo carrier with ramp. 500lb capacity. \$160 firm. Call 276-694-5858 for more information and leave message.

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Master two-bed bedroom for rent. Fully furnished. 12 minutes from Martinsville. Will rent to 55+ female. No smoking, pets or drinking. 1 person, \$359/month + \$31 for utilities. 2nd person \$135. Call or text 276-790-5965.

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦♦♦ Moderate ♦♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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FRIDAY
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LEGAL

ORDER OF PUBLICATION Case No. CWF24-257
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1;8.01-316,-317,20-104
PATRICK CIRCUIT COURT
101 WEST BLUE RIDGE STREET/PO BOX 148, STUART, VA 24171
ESTATE OF JOHN WILLIAM ADKINS v. JOHN DOE
BONNIE LOU LAWSON; UNKNOWN HEIRS OF ADMINISTRATOR JOHN WILLIAM ADKINS
The object of this suit is to:
TO LOCATE ANY LAWFUL HEIRS OF JOHN WILLIAM ADKINS
It is ORDERED that ANY HEIR OF JOHN W. ADKINS CONTACT THE PLAINTIFF appear at the above-named court and protect his/her interests on or before APRIL 16, 2025
MARCH 21, 2025

Clerk

LEGAL

RFP 2025-MNT-001
The Patrick County School Board is accepting competitive sealed proposals from licensed contractors to install Tnemec Decorative Flake Floor System at Blue Ridge Elementary School, 5135 Ararat Highway, Ararat, VA 24053. Proposal drawings and specifications are available as a PDF file from the Maintenance Office at 117 Via Avenue, Stuart, VA 24171 or e-mail Chad Haynes at chad.haynes@patrick.k12.va.us. There will be a pre-bid meeting at the site on Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 3:30 p.m. EST. Proposals are due by Friday, April 11, 2025: 10:00 a.m. EST at the above listed address.

Meetings

Thursday, April 10

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

Monday, April 14

The Patrick County Board of Supervisors will meet at 6 p.m. in the third-floor court room of the Patrick County Administration Building.

Wednesday, April 16

The Stuart Town Council will meet at 6 p.m. in the Town Office.

Events

Friday, March 28

Wayside Community Church, 3520 Wayside Road, Stuart, will hold a night of music and fellowship starting at 6:30 p.m. Music will be by The Gregory Family from Lynchburg and the guest speaker will be Orville Gregory. A light meal and refreshments will be served after the service.

Saturday, March 29

The Patrick County Democratic Party will meet at 11 a.m. in the Patrick County Library.

Stuart Baptist Church

will hold an evening of bluegrass and southern gospel music performed by Whosoever, The Joyful Noise, and Four-forOne starting at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 2

The DMV Connect Mobile Unit will be at the Patrick Henry Community College Site, 212 Wood Brothers Dr., Stuart, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Closed for lunch 12:30 -1:30 p.m. This event is open to the public for driver transactions, with no appointment needed.

The Patrick County Chamber of Commerce

will hold a Lunch & Learn at 12 p.m. in Room 103 at the Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) Stuart site. The workshop will focus on Succession Planning and it's free. Registration is available at www.patrickchamber.com.

Friday, April 4

The community food truck will be at the Woolwine SRRS from 3-4 p.m.

Saturday, April 5

Creasey's Chapel will hold a BINGO! Games, Food, Prizes. Doors open at 4 p.m., bingo starts at 5 p.m. \$25 for 20 cards, 10 door prize tickets and 1 coverall.

Ross Harbour Church's annual estate/yard sale fundraiser, with all proceeds going to fund scholarships or other assistance for children in need. The outside sale starts at 7 a.m.; inside 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free coffee and hotdogs.

Monday, April 7

The annual Patrick County Tourism Summit will be held at the Star Theatre. Registration is at 8: 30 a.m., and people should RSVP by March 31. Lunch will be provided.

Thursday, April 10

The Patrick County Senior Citizens Group will meet at 11 a.m. in the Hooker Building at Rotary Field in Stuart. Entertainment will be provided by Herbert and Tina Conner. Chopped barbecue, slaw, buns and beverages will be provided for lunch. Attendees are requested to bring their favorite side dishes and desserts to share.

Sunday, April 13

The Rockingham and Stokes County Genealogical Society meets at 2:30 p.m. in the McMichael Meeting Room of the Madison-Mayodan Library, 611 Burton St., Madison, NC. Jeff Bul-lins will be our speaker. The Board of Directors will meet at 1:30 p.m., before the regular meet-ing.

Friday, April 18

The community food truck will be at Fairys-tone VFD from 3-4 p.m.

Saturday, April 19

Charity car wash by the Patrick County High School (PCHS) Senior Beta students at Advance Auto in Stuart, to raise money for PCHS stu-dents traveling to the National Senior Beta convention and competition in Florida this sum-mer. The rain date is Saturday, April 26.

Saturday, April 26

The Rockingham and Stokes County Genea-logical Society's Spring Swap Meet will be held 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Francisco Community Building/Volunteer Fire Department located on Highway 89 in Francisco, Stokes County, N.C. Free. Bring your family history information, family photographs, etc. to share. Printer avail-able to print any "discoveries" for a nominal fee. Bring a covered dish. Authors or other histori-cal or genealogical societies are invited to bring books to sell or set up an information table.

Tuesday, May 6

The Patrick County Chamber of Commerce will hold a Lunch & Learn at 12 p.m. at the Pat-rick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) Stu-art site. The workshop will focus on pre-venture planning for entrepreneurs and it's free.

Ongoing

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

Patrick County Alzheimer's Group LLC is

open Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. During opening hours an inside yard sale is open to the public. Proceeds from the yard sales are used to purchase supplies. Members meet on the first Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Alzheimer's office, locat-ed on Wood Brothers Drive, in the basement of Hills Tax Service. New members are welcome. For more information, call (276) 693-6018.

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

The Ararat Ruritan Club 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. Inter-ested veterans are welcome to attend.

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 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.; Appalachian Acoustic Open Jam, every Friday. Doors open at 6 p.m. for food. The mu-sic and dancing are 6:30-9 p.m.; Golden Oldies Open Jam is on the last Tuesday of the month. Doors open at 6 p.m. for food, music and dancing from 6:30-9 p.m.

Connect Health+ Wellness offers free confi-dential Medicaid/FAMIS application and renew-al assistance for Virginia residents from birth to 64. No sign-up fees, no premiums, no deduct-ibles. Medicaid renewals have resumed. Medic-aid members need to keep their mailing address and contact information up to date. Connect Health + Wellness' specially trained Medicaid/ FAMIS Outreach Advocate can provide more in-formation. Call or text Ann Walker, (276) 732-0509, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Patrick County Senior Citizens is sponsoring two upcoming trips — three-days, two-nights to Lancaster, Pa., June 18–20, and a one-day trip on August 2 is planned to NarroWay Dinner Theatre, Fort Mill, South Carolina. For more information, call (276) 694-3917.

Salem Church on Salem Road in Critz holds a community meal on the first Sunday of every month at 12:10 p.m. Call (276) 222-1069 with questions.

Input sought on proposed intersection improvement projects

Carroll County in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will hold a citizen information meeting to discuss two proposed intersection improvement projects. The meeting will be held on Thursday, April 3, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Carroll County Government Center located at 605 Pine Street in Hillsville.

The first project is at the intersection of U.S. 58 (Carrollton Pike) and Virginia 620 (Coulson Church Road). The second project is at the intersection of Virginia 100 (Sylvatus Highway) and Virginia 221 (Floyd Pike).

Carroll County has submitted these two proposed projects for funding to the Commonwealth Transportation Board and the board will consider funding these projects in June. This meeting is being held to receive input before the projects are funded and developed.

The proposed improvements at the intersection of U.S. 58 and Virginia 620 include an in-

novative design known as a Restricted Crossing U-turn (RCUT) which would redirect vehicles that currently turn left onto U.S.58 from Virginia 620 to make right turns and proceed to make a U-turn.

The proposed improvement at the intersection of Virginia 100 and Virginia 221 is constructing a single-lane roundabout.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For more information or special assistance to participate in this meeting for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights Division at 540-387-5552 or TTY/TDD 711.

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Daryl Atkins on guitar (left to right), singer Rita Kay, Elijah Smith on mandolin, and Levi Head on bass. (Photo by Mary Dellenback Hill, Representative for Dan River District Patrick County Tourism Council.)

Willis Gap Open Jam draws 30 musicians for a night of music

By Mary Dellenback Hill
We had a massive open jam at Willis Gap Community Center, with 30 musicians and singers. Two young men dropped in to play and sing. Elijah Smith, Mount Airy, N.C., on Mandolin and Levi Head, Mount Airy, N.C., on Guitar. They play with The Nunn Brothers. They were the hit of the night.
We thank everyone who volun-

teers and visits us at The Willis Gap Community Center Open Jam every Friday Night. Last Tuesday Night is always the Golden Oldies Open Jam. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for food and drinks. Music and dancing from 6:30 until 9 p.m. Always 50/50 drawing at about 8:15 pm. For more information, contact Mary Dellenback Hill at (276) 251-4068, or email marhill196648@yahoo.com.

Sales of Girl Scout Cookies end locally March 31

Girl Scout Cookies will soon be gone for the season. The Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council's annual Girl Scout Cookie program wraps up on Sunday, March 31. So be sure to stock up on those Thin Mints, Samoas, Tagalongs, Do-si-dos, Lemon-Ups, Toffee-tastic, Trefoils, Adventurefuls, and Girl Scout S'mores (last year for this cookie variety). (Or grab some extras to pop into the freezer until next January's cookie season. Thin Mints freeze well and are a tasty summertime treat!)
Priced at just \$6 per box, cookie purchases support local Girl

Scouts while customers walk away with a sweet treat as a "thank you!" Use the Cookie Finder on www.gsvsc.org/cookies to search for local booths.
Can't eat them? Treat them! Customers can also donate cookie purchases to assist community partners through the council's Cookies for a Cause. Donated cookies go to local military, nurses, first responders and teachers within our local communities. Simply purchase a box (or more) to be gifted at the end of the season.
Cookie proceeds stay local to power life changing experiences

DAR demonstrates freeze-dried methods



Sheree Russo (left) explains to Betty Banks, Julie Brannon and Lucy Rudd how freeze-dried foods are prepared and stored.

for Girl Scouts year-round including camp, travel, community service, higher awards, and more. As the community opens their favorite box of Girl Scout Cookies, they simultaneously open new doors for Girl Scouts to explore their leadership potential, build lifelong friendships, and make the world a better place.
Virginia Skyline Council covers 36 counties in Virginia with a footprint spanning the regions of Roanoke Valley, New River Valley, Alleghany Highlands, Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro, Harrisonburg/Rockburg, Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Central Virginia, and Southside.
New Girl Scouts in grades K-12 can start their journey to fun, friendship, and new experiences by joining the world's largest entrepreneurial organization for girls FOR FREE at any point in the year www.gsvsc.org/join.

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Laurel Hill's Many Ladies: Elizabeth Perkins Letcher Hairston

By Tom Perry
We often talk of the men who shaped Laurel Hill's history, but lost is the impact that many

women had on the history of the birthplace of James Ewell Brown "Jeb" Stuart. Seldom does one woman become the matriarch of several families, but that is not the case for Elizabeth Perkins Letcher Hairston.
On November 20, 1778, William Letcher married Elizabeth Perkins and moved to Henry County, present day Ararat in Patrick County. Elizabeth, born on May 13,

1759, to Nicholas and Bethenia Hardin Perkins, grew up at Perkins Ferry in Halifax, now Pittsylvania County.
The first Nicholas Perlies came to Virginia in 1641 and settled in Charles City County. His son, Nicholas, married Sarah Childress, lived in Henrico County, and produced a son, Constantine. He married Ann Pollard and lived in Goochland County. They were the

great-grandparents of General Stuart. William and Elizabeth were both descended from Nicholas Perkins and Sarah Childress. Sarah Perkins married Thomas Hughes, and their daughter Hannah married Giles Letcher.
Elizabeth's brother Peter Perkins married Agnes Wilson and built the historic home Berry Hill near Danville on land willed to him by his father. The home's name comes from the many soldiers from both sides of

the American Revolution who were believed to be buried on the property. Today, a large cemetery contains many prominent family members, including J. E. B. Stuart's sister, Columbia, who married into the Hairston clan.
On August 2, 1856, John Letcher, future Governor of Virginia, wrote of William Letcher, "He chose for his residence a spot in the southwest corner of Patrick County, Virginia, called The Hollow. It derives its name (See Laurel p. 13)

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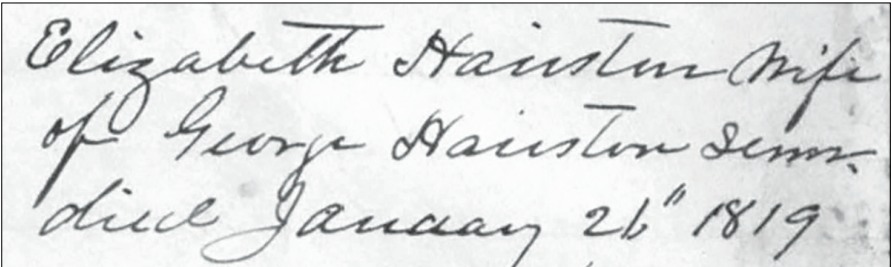
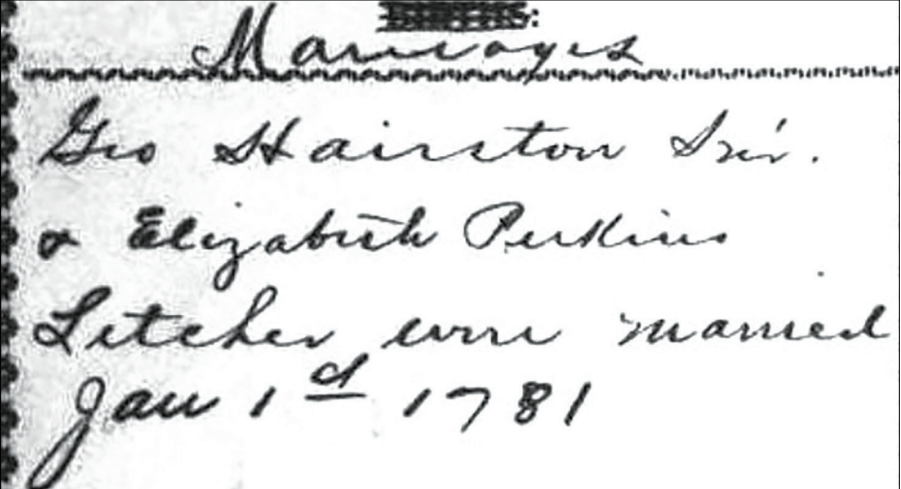
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Laurel

(cont. from page 12)



from the circular bend the mountains make around it. The Blue Ridge makes a semi-circular sweep halfway around it on the west and the Slate Mountain and Little Mountain on the east and south. The Ararat, with its waters as clear as crystal, and as swift as the arrow shot from the bow, traverse this whole valley from north to south and then empties into the Yadkin. On one of the gentle swelling hills, that lifts its head on the banks of this stream Mr. Letcher established his home.”

It is through the Perkins family that William and Elizabeth Letcher came to present-day Patrick County. John Marr married Susannah Perkins, sister of Elizabeth Perkins Letcher. Constantine Perkins married John’s sister Agatha Marr. Marr’s sons had a business relationship with the Perkins Family. John Marr died in Henry County before 1797. Marr, a land speculator, acquired the land that is the Laurel Hill Farm in 1790 from John Dawson. Two years later, he owned over 3,000 acres in the county.

The Perkins family connection stayed strong in the area. In 1801, Thomas Perkins bought a plantation in adjoining Surry County called Mount Airy. In 1819, Thomas’ son Constantine inherited Mount Airy along with land on present-day Main Street, where he built the first of many lodging establishments (most named Blue Ridge). The Perkins home, Mount Airy, was located on high ground above the Ararat River between present-day Hamburg Street and Quaker Road in present-day Mount Airy, North Carolina. In 1780, Thomas Smith purchased 400 acres nearby for fifty shillings. The property contained a large granite outcropping. Today, it is the largest open-faced granite quarry in the world, and North Carolina Granite Corporation operates it in Mount Airy, North Carolina.

Elizabeth and William Letcher left little documentation except a list of possessions and the significant events in their lives. They grew corn and tobacco in the bottomland along the river. They held livestock, including twenty head of cattle, ten hogs, and five horses. There were nine slaves named David, Ben, Witt, Abraham, Dick, Look, Nunn, Randolph, and Craft. William Letcher’s estate inventory in the Henry County courthouse includes many household and farm items you would expect. These included saddlebags, rifles, three feather beds, and a looking glass.

On March 21, 1780, Elizabeth gave birth to her first child, Bethenia. This small child became the connection that led to her famous grandson’s birth at Laurel

Hill over fifty years later. Bethenia’s daughter wrote of William Letcher then, “He had the promise of long years of happiness and usefulness and domestic felicity, but a serpent lurked in his path, for whom he felt too great a contempt to take any precautions.”

The clouds of war reached the home of William and Elizabeth Letcher that summer with tragic results in the form of Tories, those loyal to the British. John Adams said of the Tories, “A Tory here is the most despicable animal in the creation. Spiders, toads, snakes are their only proper emblems.”

Oral tradition abounds today in Patrick County about the death of William Letcher. One version has Letcher shot from a nearby ridge while stepping onto his porch. Another has him shot through a window of his home by a coward lurking outside at night. The most romantic and accepted story tells that Letcher was in his fields on August 2, 1780, when a stranger came to the house and asked Elizabeth Perkins Letcher about her husband’s whereabouts. She replied that he would return shortly and invited the visitor to stay. When Letcher entered, the man identified himself as Nichols, a local Tory leader, and said, “I demand you in the name of His Majesty.” Letcher replied, “What do you mean?” Nichols shot Letcher. The Tory fled the home leaving the dying Patriot in the arms of his wife, his last words reportedly being, “Hall is responsible for this.” Hall reportedly fled towards Kentucky, but Indians along the Holston River killed his entire family.

Today, William Letcher rests in the bottomlands along the Ararat River in Patrick County’s oldest marked grave. His tombstone, placed by his daughter before she died in 1845, states the following. “In memory of William Letcher, who was assassinated in his own house in the bosom of his family by a Tory of the Revolution, on August 2, 1780, age about 30 years. May the tear of sympathy fall upon the couch of the brave.”

Elizabeth and baby daughter Bethenia’s stories were only beginning. After the death of her husband, the family tradition holds that George Hairston led troops into The Hollow, captured Nichols (the supposed assassin of William Letcher), gave him a drumhead trial, and hung him. For years, the area went by the name Drumhead, including the letters written by J. E. B. Stuart. The author believes the Stuart family associated the area near William Letcher’s grave with the tradition that the murderers of the former, after

capture, succumbed to execution by hanging after receiving the justice of a drumhead court martial.

George Hairston carried Elizabeth Perkins Letcher and her baby, Bethenia, to the Hairston home, Marrowbone, in Henry County. As this was a journey of several days with overnight stops and no chaperone, honor caused George to propose marriage to his friend’s wife rather than sully her reputation. George Hairston married Elizabeth Perkins Letcher on January 1, 1781. Family tradition states he gave her two Chickasaw ponies and a buckskin saddle heavily embroidered as a wedding gift. The newly married couple rode to their home at George Hairston’s house, Beaver Creek, just north of present-day Martinsville in Henry County, Virginia, with a groomsman carrying baby Bethenia.

George Hairston did not forget the friend he lost during the American Revolution, and family tradition points to his warm feelings for his stepdaughter, Bethenia Letcher. Exhaustive searches of multiple county land records in Virginia do not reveal ownership by William Letcher of Laurel Hill. In 1790, John Marr purchased the 2,816 acre tract that included Laurel Hill and two years later conveyed 550 acres to William Letcher’s daughter, who was still a minor, for five hundred pounds. Marr and George Hairston were known to have a business relationship.

Elizabeth Perkins Letcher Hairston died on January 7, 1818. A few years before her death, a visiting officer met her and said she reminded him of Meg Merriless, a poem by John Keats.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon,
An old red blanket cloak she wore,
A chip-hat had she on.
God rest her aged bones somewhere –
She died full long ago!
Elizabeth Perkins Letcher Hairston Genealogy
Birth: May 13, 1759, Pittsylvania County, Virginia
Marriages
William Letcher 1750-1780 married 1778
George Hairston 1750–1827 married 1781
Elizabeth Perkins Letcher Hairston Death: January 26, 1818 (aged 59)
Henry County, Virginia, USA
Burial: Hairston Family Cemetery-Beaver Creek Plantation, Martinsville, Henry County, Virginia, USA
Children with William Letcher
Bethenia Letcher Pannill
1780–1845
Children with George Hairston
Robert Hairston
1783–1852
George R. “Old Rusty” Hairston Jr
1784–1863
Harden Hairston
1786–1862
Samuel Pannill Hairston
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1797–1816
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RU's Board of Visitors votes to set tuition, fees for upcoming academic year

In its March quarterly meetings, the Radford University Board of Visitors voted unanimously to authorize a 1.99% tuition increase for in-state undergraduate students, a 4% increase for out-of-state undergraduate students, a 4% increase for all graduate students and a mandatory comprehensive fee increase of 6% for all full-time students for the 2025-26 academic year.

The tuition and fee increases apply to all Radford University locations and will allow the university to continue delivering high-quality experiences for all students within the framework of a sustainable long-term budgeting model.

For full-time, in-state undergraduate students, the tuition increase is \$170 and for out-of-state undergraduates the increase is \$846. For full-time graduate students, the in-state tuition increase is \$390 and is \$762 for out-of-state students. The mandatory comprehensive fee increase is \$234 for all full-time students.

“For decades, Radford University has distinguished itself as an institution where students receive a stellar education, make lifelong connections and leave prepared for successful careers, all at a cost that is well within reach,” said rector Marquett Smith ‘85. “Affordability is a top priority at each of Virginia’s public higher education institutions. The board is confident that these rate changes meet that commitment while positioning the university for continued excellence, long term. The board is deeply appreciative of Vice President Rob Hoover and his Division of Finance and Administration staff for the work they did in preparing us to make this important decision.”

This action allows Radford University to meet mandatory cost pressures and to fulfill specific strategic initiatives in the absence of permanent base funding from the state in the FY26 budget proposal. The university is committed to delivering high-quality academic programs, supporting operational effectiveness, and focusing on student success and well-being, while remaining one of the most affordable universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In 2024-25, Radford offered the fourth-most affordable four-year, in-state undergraduate total costs among Virginia public institutions at an average of \$24,608, 16% less than the state’s average total cost. Total costs include tuition, room and board, and mandatory fees.

“I am confident that these changes will allow Radford University to continue providing both a high-quality and affordable student experience, while ensuring the long-term health of the institution,” said President Bret Danilowicz. “Our university has made remarkable strides to prove the value of the distinct Radford experience to prospective students and to our currently enrolled student body. The new freshman and transfer enrollment growth last fall, combined with the outstanding retention and graduation rates we experienced this spring, are indicators that continued investments made in our classroom and campus experience are positioning students to graduate and to launch successful careers and lives.”

Radford University has significantly enhanced its commitment to providing an affordable educational pathway for Virginians in recent years, offering a variety of financial assistance options for students.

The tuition increase for the 2025-26 academic year will be covered by the Radford Tuition Promise. The Promise guarantees full coverage of tuition costs for in-state undergraduate students (in-person) whose Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) is \$100,000 or less and a Student Aid Index (SAI) of less than \$15,000. In the current academic year, 2,292 undergraduate students have received Promise benefits. Radford also automatically considers both new freshmen and transfer students for merit-based scholarships.

Along with direct institutional support, the Radford University Foundation awards over 1,000 donor-funded scholarships annually, expected to total more than \$3.2 million in the 2025-26 academic year. The recently completed TOGETHER Campaign, which raised a record-setting \$106,693,338, created 178 new scholarships.



Reenactment at Sailor’s Creek Battlefield.

Step into history at 160th battle anniversary events

There were several battles that took place in Virginia that were crucial to ending the Civil War. Sailor’s Creek Battlefield Historical and High Bridge Trail State Park are both holding events that showcase how the parks’ land was utilized in the past.

Sailor’s Creek Battlefield State Park will commemorate the 160th battle anniversary on April 5 and two re-enactments are scheduled during the day along with an evening program that highlights the Hillsman House and its historic role during the war.

“The day will be broken down into three parts so the guests can experience the different stages of the battle,” said Sailor’s Creek Battlefield State Park Manager David Gunnells. “In between the morning and afternoon demonstrations, guests are encouraged to interact with the historians as they share stories from the past and discuss the day-to-day reality of this time period. The evening program will provide a tour of the Hillsman House where guests can step into the past and experience the aftermath of the battle.”

The event runs from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. and all programs are free to the public. It is encouraged for guests to bring lawn chairs and dress for rapidly changing weather. Refreshments will be available for purchase. Portions of the program are self-guided and will include elevation changes, uneven terrain and walking several

hundred yards. Please wear closed-toe shoes and dress comfortably.

High Bridge Trail State Park will recognize the 160th battle anniversary with events on April 3, 5, 6 and 7. On April 3 the evening program will feature a panel of living historians who will discuss the decisions and personalities that shaped the end of the Civil War in Virginia. April 5 and 6 will have programs during the day that allow guests to step back in time and experience the daily life of a soldier. On the evening of April 6, guests will have the opportunity to experience a living history about two local soldiers in Farmville during the Appomattox campaign. On April 7 there will be a guided walk that follows the paths of Union and Confederate soldiers. The strategic importance of the High Bridge and the fight to control it will be discussed.

“These events are truly important milestones in American history as we remember those who fought to protect the land that we enjoy today,” said High Bridge Trail State Park Manager Daniel Jordan.

The commemorations will take place rain or shine. There is a \$5 parking fee to enter High Bridge Trail State Park.

For more information about the activities during the day, visit the Sailor’s Creek State Park event web page and the High Bridge Trail State Park event web page.

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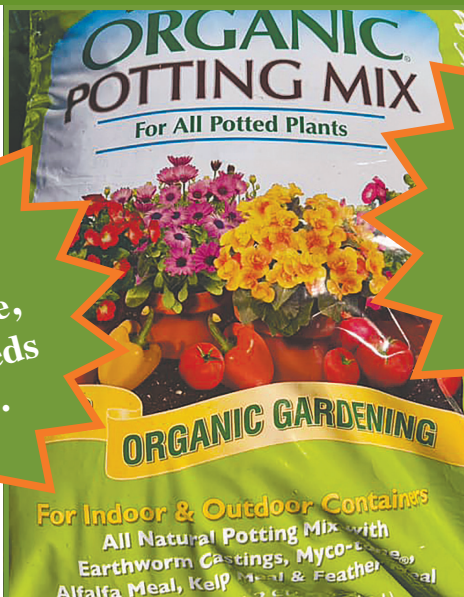
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Budget-friendly ways to freshen up your home’s exterior

As any homeowner knows, renovation projects tend to cost a lot of money. The average cost of a home renovation is difficult to gauge, as such endeavors run the gamut from complex projects like a kitchen overhaul to simpler ones like painting a room inside a home. Indeed, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry notes that scope is what drives the cost of a renovation project.

Though there might not be an “average cost” of a renovation project, homeowners can expect to spend thousands of dollars on projects that are not very small in scale. Navigating such an expense at a time when inflation remains high might be difficult for some homeowners looking to maintain the appearance of their home exteriors. However, there are many budget-friendly ways homeowners can tend to the exterior of their properties.

· **Power washing:** Power washing won’t break the bank but it can revive the look of a home. Power washing removes dirt and grime from the siding of a home and a power washing can be used to clean porches, walkways and patios as well. Hardware chains like Home Depot and Lowes typically rent power washers, but homeowners who don’t want to do it themselves can hire a professional for a few hundred dollars, if not less. Power washing after winter can be a good idea, as the elements can take a toll on a home’s exterior. A good power washing before spring and sum-

mer entertaining season can thus give a home a fresh, clean look without breaking the bank.

· **Furnished front porch:** A furnished front porch can serve as a welcome sign to neighbors and provide a great place to relax with a morning cup of coffee and a good book. Homeowners with a small porch won’t need to bust their budgets to upgrade their front porch furnishings. Some small chairs with bright cushions, a small table and a rug underfoot can revamp an entryway at low cost.

· **Window box installation:** Installing window box planters is another cost-effective way to brighten up a home’s exterior. Homeowners can hang window boxes outside windows on the front of their homes and then fill them with brightly colored flowers to add an inviting pop of color to their home exteriors. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens urge homeowners to take weight into consideration before buying window planters. Keep in mind that soil and developed plants can be heavy, so look for a sturdy box as well as one that has drainage holes.

· **Replace hardware:** Another simple way to freshen up a stale exterior is to replace hardware. Door knobs, knockers, house numbers, and even the mailbox can appear dated after a while. Replacing these items is inexpensive and quick but can have a profound impact on how the exterior of a home appears to residents and visitors.



Exterior renovations need not break the bank. Various simple and inexpensive tweaks can quickly revitalize the exterior of a home

Outdoor living: a natural prescription for better health

Few things can be as distracting as a beautiful day. When the weather outside is welcoming, it can be hard to focus on indoor activities, including work and tasks around the house. Though it’s not advisable to ignore responsibilities at work and at home when the weather outside beckons, it can be beneficial to spend ample time in nature when circumstances allow.

People tend to flock to the great outdoors in spring, summer and fall, and some are even so devoted that they bundle up and head outside throughout winter. Whether they know it or not, people who love to spend time in nature are doing their mental and physical health a lot of good by embracing the great outdoors.






There’s no shortage of benefits to spending time in nature. That’s something to keep in mind the next time welcoming weather beckons you to get some fresh air.

Mental health benefits
The National Alliance of Mental Illness notes that a growing body of research supports the idea that time in nature is good for mental health. A 2015 study from researchers at Stanford University found that people who walked in a natural area for 90 minutes exhibited decreased activity in a region of the brain associated with depression compared to those who walked in high-traffic urban settings.




The United Kingdom-based Mental Health Foundation also touts the mental health benefits of the great outdoors. According to the MHF, research shows that people who are connected with nature are more likely to report their lives are worthwhile than those with no such connectedness. In addition, the MHF notes time in nature has been shown to generate positive emotions, including calmness and joy, and promote

greater creativity.
When seeking to capitalize on the mental health benefits of time in nature, people should know that where they spend time outdoors matters. As the Stanford study indicated, time outside in high-traffic urban settings may not produce as profound an effect as time spent in natural settings, like forests, that tend to be more serene. People who live in cities or other densely populated areas can

still benefit from time outdoors, but they might experience even greater health gains if they make consistent efforts to spend time in more natural settings.
Physical health benefits
The physical health benefits of time in nature are equally notable. Perhaps the most obvious physical benefit is related to physical activity. People tend to embrace physical activity when spending time in nature. Hiking, jogging, walking, nature-based recreational activities like kayaking, and playing sports like basketball or pickleball all involve physical activity, which can help people avoid the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle, such as an increased risk for chronic diseases. More specifically, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation notes the physical health benefits of spending time outside include:
· A stronger immune system
· Lower blood pressure
· Increased energy levels
· Improved sleep
Each of those benefits contributes to greater overall health, making time outdoors among the more beneficial behaviors a person can embrace.



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Did You Know?

Home renovations are wildly popular, and that popularity can be traced to a number of factors. Some homeowners renovate their homes with their own comfort in mind, while others do so to improve the resale value of the property. For those in the latter group, a recognition of renovations that yield the highest return on investment may help them decide which projects to pursue. According to the housing market research and analytics firm Zonda Media, a garage door replacement offered the highest return on investment in the American real estate market in 2024, earning a whopping 194 percent return on homeowners’ initial investment. An entry door replacement with steel door offered the second best ROI at 188 percent of homeowners’ initial investment, while replacing siding with stone veneer was third on the list with an average ROI of 153 percent.



Home Improvement Projects With The Highest ROI

194% ROI - Garage Door Replacement
188% ROI - Entry Door Replacement Made of Steel
153% ROI - Replacing Siding with Stone Veneer

According to the housing market research and analytics firm Zonda Media.

Creating a peaceful backyard retreat

Backyards have undergone quite a transformation over the last decade-plus. The days when patios and decks were all a backyard living space had to offer are largely a thing of the past, as homeowners have realized just how valuable it can be to commit to a stunning backyard.

The real estate experts at Zillow estimate that homes with backyard features such as outdoor televisions, outdoor showers and outdoor kitchens command 3.1 percent more than expected upon reaching the market. If 3.1 percent doesn't sound like a lot, it actually equates to nearly \$11,000 on a typical home. But there's more to gain than money when converting a backyard space into a relaxing respite. Such spaces can provide a welcoming escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life, all the while giving homeowners and residents a comfortable space to soak in the great outdoors. With that in mind, homeowners can take the following steps to establish a peaceful backyard retreat.

- Refresh the landscape. Even if your vision is centered on outdoor furniture and a space that accommodates movie nights under the stars, it's still best to refresh the existing landscape if it needs a little upkeep. Overgrown trees, hedges and bushes can create the same cluttered vibe that dominates interior spaces overrun with items. If necessary, work with a local tree service or landscape architect to trim, or even remove, trees and hedges that are crowding the backyard and making it feel claustrophobic or giving it an unkempt look. Aim for a landscape that affords a balance of sun and shade so the space is as comfortable as possible throughout the day.

- Set up multiple gathering spaces, if possible. Once a backyard retreat is established, everyone who calls the property home might find the space hard to resist. Keep this in mind when planning the space and aim to set up multiple gathering spaces. An outdoor kitchen with a nearby dinner table can be a great space to en-



A relaxing backyard retreat can make for an ideal space to escape the hustle and bustle of daily life.

joy al fresco dining, but a separate area to read a book or watch a movie or ballgame can make the space more versatile. Some may want to relax away from the noise of the grill area, and multiple gathering spaces ensures there's always a peaceful spot to unwind out back.

- Add a water feature. Running water has a way of calming the nerves, and that's good to keep in mind when planning a backyard retreat. Water features run the gamut from garden ponds to koi ponds to fountains to hot tubs. Homeowners can identify which feature best aligns with their idea of relaxation and then work with a landscape architect to ensure it's installed in their backyard oasis.

- Don't forget shade. Temperatures are rising in many areas of the globe, and that's worth noting when planning a backyard retreat. Even the most ardent sun worshippers likely won't want to be exposed to the sun at all times when relaxing in their backyards. Strategically chosen means of providing shade can make spaces enjoyable all day long. Consider umbrellas, gazebos, pergolas, and even retractable awnings to cover patios and decks when the sun is at its highest each afternoon. If you plan to spend ample time in the grass, make that more enjoyable by planting shade trees, which also can protect the grass from drought and make it more comfortable underfoot.

The basics of fertilizing a lawn



Fertilizing in spring can help a lawn recover from the previous summer and winter, ensuring it's lush and green when summer entertaining season arrives.

Spring marks the return of lawn and garden season. Lawns often bear the brunt of winter's wrath, so spring is a great time to nurse them back to health, and fertilizing can be an essential component of that process.

Fertilizing a lawn can be intimidating. An array of fertilizers, with each seemingly designed to address a different issue, can make homeowners' heads spin when visiting their local lawn and garden center. However, fertilizing is a very simple task that any homeowner can tackle. In fact, fears about fertilizing are often unfounded and can be overcome with some basic knowledge of the process.

- Identify which type of grass is in the yard. The home improvement experts at HGTV note that turf-grass is divided into two categories: cool-season grass and warm-season grass. A local lawn and garden center can help homeowners identify which type of grass is in the yard, and this often depends on location. Fescue, bluegrass and perennial ryegrass are some examples of cool-season grasses, while Bermuda, bahia, St. Augustine, and zoysia are considered warm-season grasses. Identifying which type of grass is in the lawn is important because that will indicate when to fertilize. Cool-season grasses are typically best fertilized in early spring, while warm-season lawns can benefit from an application just before es-

pecially warm temperatures arrive.

- Survey the lawn to identify which spreader to use. A small yard or a thriving lawn with only a few bald or unsightly patches may not need a full application of fertilizer. In such instances, a hand spreader can suffice. For larger lawns and areas, a broadcast spreader is the ideal option. Spreaders have multiple settings, and the fertilizer package will indicate which setting to utilize when using the product.

- Test the soil prior to purchasing fertilizer. The lawn experts at Pennington® note that a simple soil test can reveal soil pH and phosphorus and potassium levels. Soil tests can be purchased at most home improvement stores and lawn and garden centers, and they can help homeowners determine which fertilizer will most benefit their lawns.

- Water the lawn prior to fertilizing. The experts at Scotts® recommend a good watering a few days prior to fertilizing a lawn. Such an approach ensures the soil is ready to accept the fertilizer once it's applied.

- Follow the instructions carefully. Detailed instructions are typically provided on fertilizer product packaging. Once homeowners have identified and purchased the product they need, they can simply follow the instructions on the packaging, including how and when to water after application, which can make fertilizing less intimidating.



It's almost gardening season, which means gardeners can start on the necessary prep work to ensure their gardens grow in strong and beautiful this spring.

Tips to revitalize a garden this spring

Gardening is a rewarding hobby that pays a host of significant dividends. Many people love gardening because it allows them to spend time outdoors, and that simple pleasure is indeed a notable benefit of working in a garden. But the National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture notes that gardening provides a host of additional benefits, including helping people get sufficient levels of exercise, reduce stress and improve mood.

- With so much to gain from gardening, it's no wonder people look forward to getting their hands dirty in the garden each spring. As the weather warms up, consider these tips to help bring a garden back to life.

- Discard the dead weight. Winter can take its toll on a garden, even in regions where the weather between December and early spring is not especially harsh. Discard dead plants that have lingered into spring and prune any perennials that need it. Branches that fell during winter storms also should be removed at this point if they have not previously been discarded.

- Test the soil. Soil testing kits can be purchased at local garden centers and home improvement retailers. Such tests are inexpensive and can reveal if the soil needs to be amended to help plants thrive in the months to come.

- Mulch garden beds. Mulching benefits a garden by helping soil retain moisture and preventing the growth of weeds. Various garden experts note that mulching in spring can prevent weed seeds from germinating over the course of spring and summer. That means plants won't have to fight with weeds for water when the temperature warms up. It also means gardeners won't have to spend time pulling weeds this summer.

- Inspect your irrigation system. Homeowners with in-ground irrigation systems or above-ground systems that utilize a drip or soaker function can inspect the systems before plants begin to bloom. Damaged sprinkler heads or torn lines can deprive plants of water they will need to bloom and ultimately thrive once the weather warms up.

- Tune up your tools. Gardening tools have likely been sitting around gathering dust since fall. Serious gardeners know that tools can be expensive, so it pays to protect that investment by maintaining the tools. Sharpened pruners help make plants less vulnerable to infestation and infection. Well-maintained tools like shovels and hoes also make more demanding gardening jobs a little bit easier, so don't forget to tune up your tools before the weather warms up.

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