

Work returns to normal as blaze investigation continues



Gregory Pallets & Lumber's Stuart site is set to return to business as usual following a structure fire on March 28.

By Taylor Boyd
More than a week after a commercial structure fire occurred at Gregory Pallet & Lumber's Stuart site at approximately 1 a.m. on March 28, work at the facility has returned to normal and is fully operational.
Operations Director Dan Lovern said 95 per-

cent of the company's business is operated by its Roanoke facility.
"Then we have another facility in Elliston, Virginia, so we're running at 100 percent. We had a small operation there" in Stuart, "so the manufacturing, or the facility repair, and some equipment" was lost in the blaze, he said.

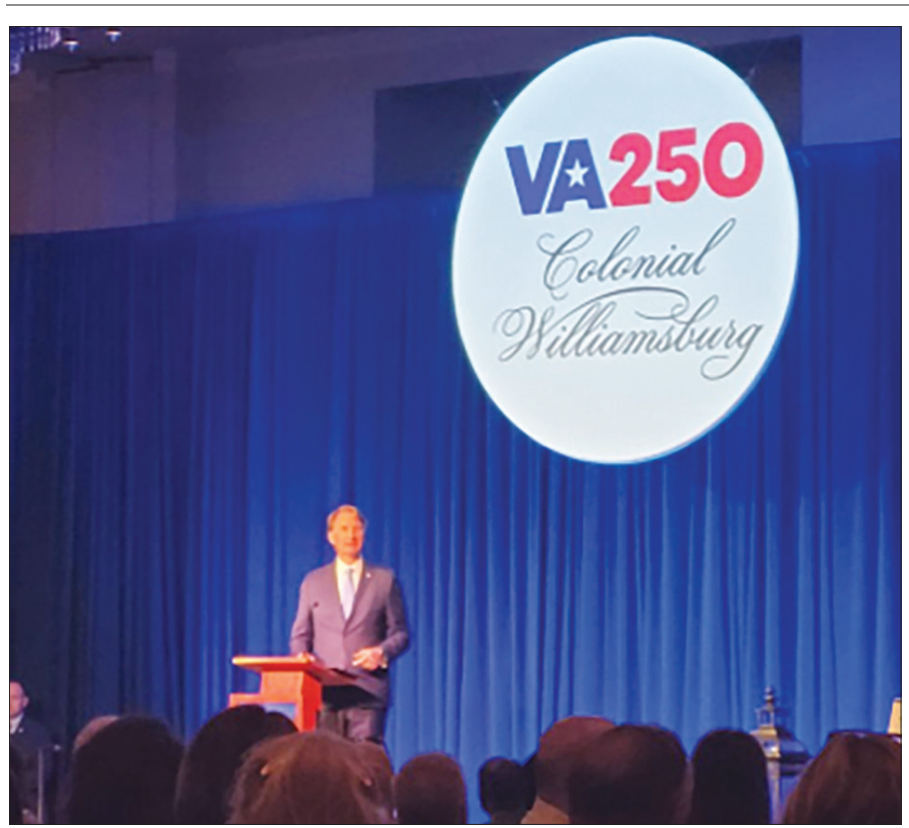
An estimated 10 acres of the approximately 20-acre facility along with numerous structures, vehicles, and other equipment was burnt in the fire.
While he doesn't have an exact figure of how much revenue was lost due to the fire, Lovern
(See Blaze Investigation p. 2)

Stuart Book Club celebrates 100 years of service, reading, and community impact

By Joanne Hill
Children, reading, books and serving others are still priorities in our community, but this all started 100 years ago with the beginning of the Stuart Book Club, one of the oldest civic organizations in Patrick County.
The Patrick County Branch Library had its beginnings with the ladies in the club, who also provided needed items for students in the school, provided Christmas treats for children in the streets of Stuart and promoted reading through their various projects. These are just a few of the things the club has accomplished by meeting monthly and volunteering actively for the past 100 years.
It is believed that during the early 1920s, local resident M. R. Taylor asked the Board of Supervisors for permission to clean out the basement of Patrick County Court-

house to form a reading room for the young men of the community. The Stuart Book Club, which was formed in 1925, picked up on this idea right away, and in 1932, they started the Corner Library located in Clark Bros. Hardware, which was at the corner of Main and Blue Ridge streets in Stuart with John L. Clark assisting by acting as librarian.
The club collected, donated and were given books by the Extension Service of the Virginia State Library, so it started the library with approximately 300 books. The lending library continued for about 20 years until the present county library was officially opened. The club's current projects still include giving free books to children during parades, providing money for children to buy books at book fairs, supporting the local library and book mobile, and they have given


a collection of Spanish books to the popular PCHS Spanish teacher.
library in memory of Ann Belcher, a
(See Book Club p. 3)



Gov. Glenn Youngkin welcomed attendees to Williamsburg.

Patrick County joins 250th celebration talks in Williamsburg

By Pat Delaney
The Patrick County VA250 Committee was represented in Williamsburg as the third and final "A Common Cause" gathering was held March 24-26. The event brought together organizers from across the country who are helping plan Amer-

ica's 250th birthday celebration on July 4, 2026.
Attendees came from 40 states and 61 Virginia localities to hear from historians, state and national planners, and to exchange ideas with other local organizers.
(See Patrick County p. 3)

Cate Frable opened Much Kneaded Massage on Main Street last month.
in the county and one who's retiring. I think massage is for everybody. I fully believe in the equity of massage, and I just really wanted to make something accessible and to help the community," she said.
Throughout her career, Frable said she has worked with clients from all walks of

life, from CEOs to bus drivers.
"I genuinely believe that the power of touch is so important, even for children. I massage my kids, and they love it. Also, the accessibility of it is important in my opinion. I'm not trying to make a killing, I'm just trying to make a living, and I
(See Massage p.2)

Blaze Investigation

(cont. from page 1)



said work is being done to calculate it.

No employees are expected to lose their jobs because of the fire, he said.

“In fact, we’ve probably kept them on just cleaning the site up. We have three drivers that run out of there and they’ve been running everyday - we just worked them into our Roanoke rotation. We have other facilities, so we’ve been able to put supplies in there from our other facilities,” Lovern said, adding the facility is expected to restart work in the repair business this week.

Due to the scale of financial loss and physical damage caused by the fire the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and Virginia State Police are assisting the Patrick County Sheriff’s Office in investigating the cause and origin of the fire.

Lovern said that as of April 2, the company hasn’t seen the fire reports or received any information from investigators.

As with the Meadow of Dan Elementary School fire more than a decade ago, Patrick County Sheriff Dan Smith said federal investigators were called into help – partially because of how large the fire was and the amount of property loss.

“It’s nothing suspicious at all. I will tell you

that,” Smith said.

Lt. Steve Austin said the sheriff’s office has relinquished the case to the Virginia State Police.

“Our involvement was to secure the scene while the State Police investigators investigated the fire,” Austin said.

Stuart Volunteer Fire Department Fire Chief Buddy Dollarhite said once the department arrived on scene the whole area was fully involved.

“We decided to go ahead and try to go county-wide and get as many departments as we possibly could and also tone out departments in Stokes County and Surry County for additional water because we knew with that large of a fire, we were going to need plenty of water,” he said.

Twenty-three fire departments, the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDF), the Patrick County Sheriff’s Office, Patrick County Emergency Management, Patrick County EMS, and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) were on scene to assist with putting out the fire.

Dollarhite estimated that there were approximately 85 fire personnel on scene with all Patrick County departments having at least one person present. Stokes, Surrey, Henry Counties also had personnel on scene.

“We utilized 22 tankers to put out pretty much the whole area there — he had 35,000 and 40,000 pallets on site. We estimated we used anywhere around 250,000 to 300,000 gallons of water to put the fire out,” he said.

Dollarhite said the pond at Buddy Williams’ place and Wayside Park were used as fill sites to refill the tankers with water.

“We pretty much took a defensive posture on it, we tried to contain what we had. All in all, it ended up being 16 acres of a brush fire,” he said.

In addition to the structure fire with the pallets, the fire spread into a brush fire across the road.

“We had a 10 acres brush fire across the road on the other side that we had to contend with as well, and that’s where we used the VDF fire plow and about five brush trucks from different departments to help contain that as well,” he said.

Dollarhite said the departments finished up most of the operations around 11 a.m. Friday morning.

“We did go back several times because there were investigators there and you have hotspots, so we went back six additional times to check on it and put some hotspots out,” he said.

Massage

(cont. from page 1)



Much Kneaded Massage is located at 141 N. Main Street, Unit 200, in Stuart.



For more information about the services offered, visit Facebook.com/MuchKneadedMassage.

really want to help make a difference,” she said.

Though Frable describes herself as typically shy and anxious, she said she feels calm and focused when working with clients.

“I don’t feel anxious; I’m just in that moment, and my goal is for everyone to come off my table feeling less pain or less stress and anxiety. As goofy as it sounds, I’ve been told, ‘Oh, you have a gift,’ and I kind of want to share that in whatever way I can, and this just seems like the right way to do it,” she said.

Services Offered

In addition to Swedish massage, Frable offers deep tissue, hot stone, prenatal, and reflexology massages. She is also a certified manual lymphatic drainage (MLD) provider.

“I took a 40-hour course for that. It’s a technique, not so much a massage, and it’s a very

gentle process. That’s really a service that is underrepresented, and a lot of people could really benefit from it,” she said.

While lymphedema — swelling caused by a lymphatic system blockage — can be genetic or injury-related, Frable said it is often a side effect of cancer and its treatment, particularly for women.

“We know with breast cancer and the axillary area, there’s a lot of lymph nodes. Your whole body has lymph nodes, but they’re most concentrated at the throat, armpit, knees, and groin area,” she said.

After radiation or chemotherapy, lymph nodes can become compromised or damaged, leading to edema in the arms or lower legs, Frable explained.

“Manual lymphatic drainage is a way to help get that fluid retention, the lymph, moving back into the system. It’s a definitely needed service that a lot of people don’t even realize is something that can help,” she said, adding that MLD has also been shown to help with migraines, fibromyalgia, and energy boosts.

With many people working desk jobs that result in shoulder and neck pain, Frable said she frequently treats clients with tension in the shoulders, trapezius muscles, rhomboids, and occipital muscles.

“They call them the ghost headache muscles because they get so tight, and especially looking down texting, a lot of that can cause headaches and migraines, and people don’t even realize. So, massage can definitely help with that,” she said.

Frable added that foot massages are particularly popular, as gravity and strain take a toll on everyone’s feet.

For more information, visit Facebook.com/MuchKneadedMassage.

To schedule an appointment, call (276) 968-0933, email CateFrableLMT@gmail.com, or visit much-kneaded-massage-100558.square.site.

Pets of the Week



‘Smiley’ is a sweet girl and was picked up on Unity Church Road In Claudville. She has not been claimed by her owner, and is now available for adoption.

This approximately 3-month-old male Lab mixed puppy is a sweet boy; a little shy, but warms up quickly.

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.

Latest unemployment insurance weekly initial claims down

The 2,575 unemployment insurance weekly initial claims that were filed during the week ending March 29, 2025, is 4.0 percent lower than last week’s 2,683 claims and 23.7 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (2,081), according to Virginia Works. Nearly 81 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (60 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and

Technical Services (435); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (255); Health Care and Social Assistance (192); Retail Trade (187); and Manufacturing (146).

Continued weeks claims (17,625) were 2.2 percent lower than last week (18,013) and were 15.2 percent higher than the comparable week of last year (15,302). Nearly 92 percent of claimants self-reported an associated industry; of those reported, the top five industries (59 percent) were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (3,281); Administrative and Support and Waste Management (2,111); Health Care and Social Assistance (1,572); Retail Trade (1,410); and Manufacturing (1,250).

A person who has already filed an initial claim and who has experienced a week of unemployment files a continued claim to claim benefits for that week

of unemployment. On a weekly basis, continued claims reflect a good approximation of the current number of insured unemployed workers filing for UI benefits, and are a good indicator of labor market conditions. While continued claims are not a leading indicator, they provide confirming evidence of the direction of the economy.

Marriage Licenses

The following marriage licenses were issued in March, according to records in the Patrick County Circuit Court Clerk’s office:

Ronnie Wilson - Bernice Lanning
Matthew Slate - Misty Strickland
Sean Harbour - Hannah Whalen

Benjamin Riddle - Sherry Taylor-Hawkins
Samuel Dickover - Faith Stowe
A license was issued to **David Breck - Kathleen Hylton** on Feb. 28. It was received after the monthly report was completed, according to the clerk’s office.

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Patrick County

(cont. from page 1)

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin welcomed attendees to Williamsburg and emphasized the opportunity the milestone presents to educate future generations about “what it has meant, what it means, and what it will mean to be an American.”

One highlight for those of the Virginia delegation was a special video presentation showcasing historical landmarks and moments from around the Commonwealth. The video concluded with the tagline, “America: Made in Virginia,” which drew enthusiastic applause from Virginians in attendance.

Carly Fiorina, national honorary chairman of VA250, followed the video with remarks about the significance of Virginia’s role in American history.



Fifes and drums entertain before the screening of Ken Burns’ “The American Revolution.”

“We do not say ‘America: Made in America’ as a brag, or as a challenge. We say it because we feel a special obligation,” she said.

The event’s emotional and cultural centerpiece came Tuesday evening, as attendees and members of the public gathered on the Palace Green for a preview of filmmaker Ken Burns’ upcoming six-part, 12-hour documentary, “The American

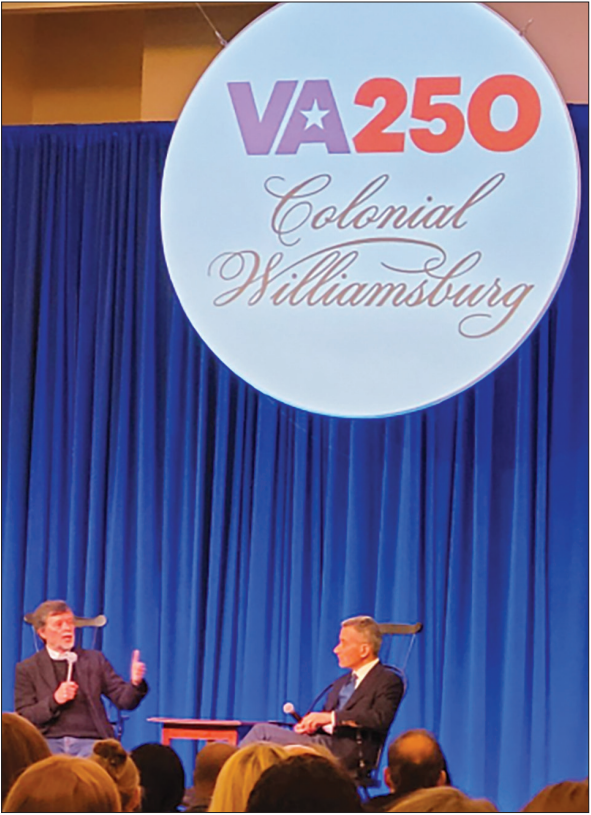
Revolution.” With the looming rain holding off, the evening concluded with fireworks against the backdrop of the Governor’s mansion.

Burns said the series, scheduled to air in November 2025, will feature both well-known and lesser-known historical figures. He expressed hope that the project and the 250th celebration will help “put the us, back in the

U.S.”

For local planners, including representatives from Patrick County, the gathering offered a valuable chance to gain inspiration and insight from other communities.

Over the next 16 months, events commemorating the Semiquincentennial will take place across Virginia and the nation. The Patrick County VA250 Committee

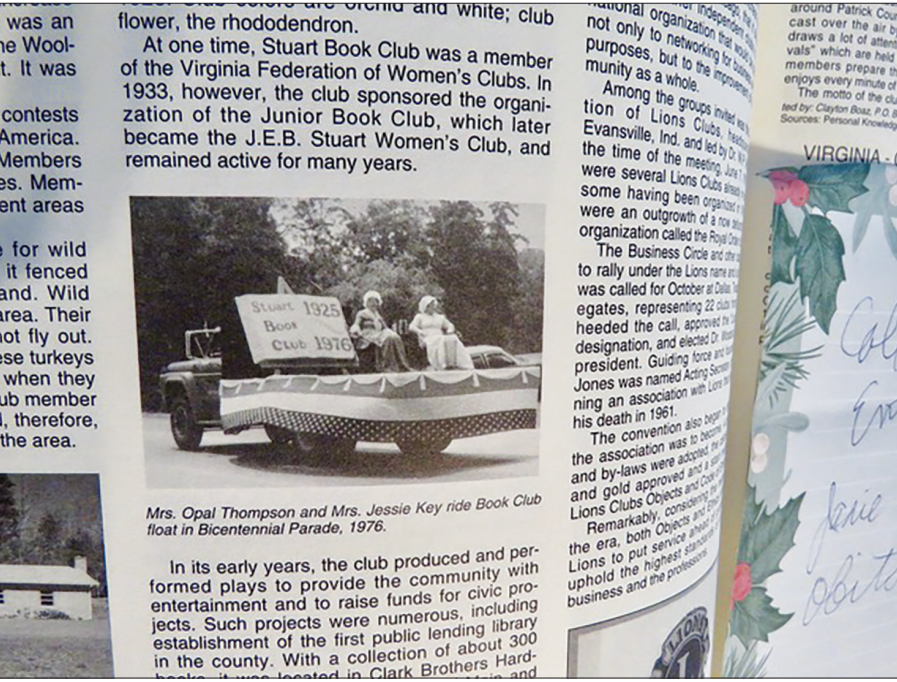


Ken Burns (left) discussed his upcoming documentary with author Jeffrey Rosen.

is currently working committee’s Facebook page, facebook.com/PatrickCountyVA250, be announced on the as details are finalized.

Book Club

(cont. from page 1)



Stuart Book Club members participated in the 1976 Bicentennial Parade. The club is one of the oldest civic organizations in the county.

Through the years, the club has done such worthy projects as furnishing the clinic room for Stuart School so that sick students would have a cot to lie on, provided hot meals for the students before the school lunch program began, furnishing care packages for WWII soldiers with soap and other need items, They also knitted sweaters and socks and rolled

bandages for the War effort. Members also collected and gave magazines and flowers to Stuart Hospital, as well as a donation of \$1500 to the building fund for the R.J. Reynolds Memorial Hospital. The club even had a float in the 1976 Bicentennial Parade in Patrick County.

The club also donates Christmas gifts for children in need through

the guidance departments at the local schools and has also funded scholarships for students for field trips, and clothing for special occasions for students who were unable to participate otherwise. Donations to allow local students to attend Camp Easter Seal were also given during the 1950s and once when needed, the club even donated a washing machine for a family.

This club, exclusive to women and to membership by nomination, is considered to be a legacy organization as many members have been descendants of previous members, often three generations have been represented.

When the club formed in 1925, there were 16 members, but in later years, it consistently remained at 12 members. Thus, 12 books are selected each year to be read and passed to another member each month. The books are varied in subject matter, according to what the individual members have chosen — which they recommend the others read. This has introduced genres that many would not have otherwise enjoyed.

Initially the meetings were held in members’ homes and a meal was often included, however the

club now meets at Stuart Presbyterian Church and the monthly hostess entertains with an interesting program and refreshments. Members interviewed for this article remain excited about what the club has accomplished and look forward to opportunities that lie ahead of them which will help make their community a better place.

A positive impact is their motivation, and although they enjoy the books they read, their true pleasure comes from serving others and their camaraderie with their fellow members.

The Book Club year book of 1926 provides the following motto: “Live neither in the past nor in the future, but in the midst of things, enriched by memory and lighted by anticipation.” This is truly the ambition of this club. Watch for further events that are being planned to celebrate their successful history and to spotlight their future endeavors.

The current membership includes Sarah Brinks, Suzanne Hutchens, Phyllis Lemke, Peggy Rogers, Denise Smith, Linda Wilson, Eva Hopkins, Betty Kirkpatrick, Barbara Pendleton, Diane Ross, Rendy Williams, and Janice Woods.

Red Bank Ruritans plan for anniversary, learn about Wills On Wheels



By Charlie Bowman

The Red Bank Ruritans met on April 1, and had as our guest speaker Sarah Bidwell from ‘Wills On Wheels.’ Bidwell spoke about wills, deeds, trusts and lots more. She travels to you to help prepare any paperwork you have a need related to your final wishes.

The club discussed how great Easter eggs are selling, and our anniversary coming this June.



Help stop pests from invading Virginia

April is Invasive Plant Pest and Disease Awareness Month, and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) asks the public to help reduce the threats that invasive pests and plants pose to the Commonwealth’s agricultural and natural resources.

Non-native plants and destructive insects can seriously threaten Virginia native species, crops, and forests across the state. These invasive species can grow and spread rapidly, often because they have no natural predators in their new environment and can out-compete native species. Once established, they can cause tremendous harm to the environment, economy, and even human health.

VDACS’ Office of Plant Industry Services (OPIS) ensures compliance with plant protection laws and regulations in the Commonwealth, and provides inspection, certification, survey, mitigation, and prevention services. OPIS monitors and combats the presence of a wide range of invasive pests, plants, and plant diseases like Spotted Lanternfly, Spongy Moth, Imported Fire Ants, Cogon Grass, Beach Vitex, Two-Horned Trapa, Vascular Streak Dieback, and many more.

The public can take steps to help prevent the introduction or spread of infestations in the Commonwealth. The following are a few

simple steps to avoid and stop the spread of invasive species:

- Don’t move firewood over long distances, as it can be a carrier of invasive insects and diseases. Use firewood that originates from the area where it will be burned. Spotted Lanternfly and Spongy Moth eggs can hitch a ride on firewood and start infestations in new areas.
- Before leaving a work or recreational site, look for and remove any insects, seeds and other plant parts that might be attached to your equipment, boots, gear, and vehicle.
- Select plants that are not invasive for your landscaping and gardening projects. Your local nursery or Virginia Cooperative Extension master gardener can tell you about the wide variety of beautiful native plants that thrive in your local environment, available at local nurseries and garden centers.
- Don’t plant seeds of invasive plants in wildlife food plots.
- Always declare any plant material brought into the United States when returning from a trip abroad.
- If you believe you’ve detected an invasive species, use VDACS’ Invasive Species Reporting Tool to document your finding.

For more information on invasive plants, pests, and diseases, visit the VDACS Office of Plant Industry Services webpage.

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The Enterprise

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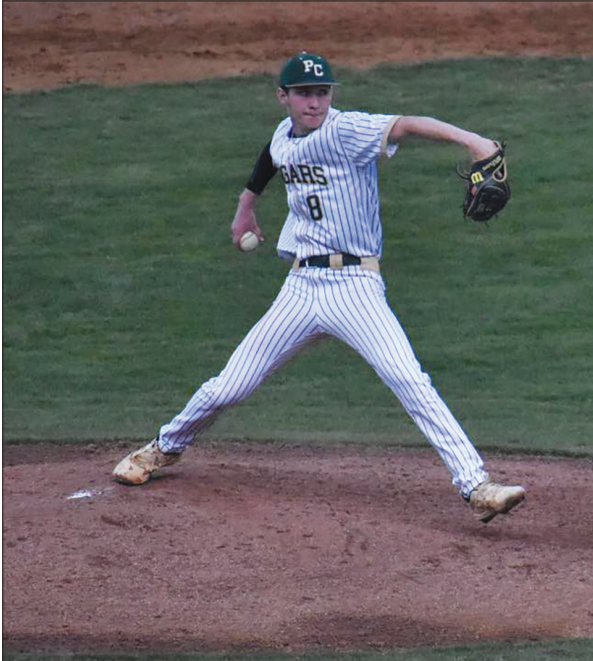


Jaiden Wilson started on the mound for the Cougars.

Cougar Baseball Defeats Martinsville

By Ashlee Mullis
The Varsity Cougar Baseball Team traveled to Hooker Field to take on the Bulldogs of Martinsville on April 2, defeating them 15-1. The Cougars were led at the plate by Easton Harris, who was 2-4 with 3 RBIs. Jackson Callahan went 2-4, scoring

2 runs. Christian Hylton was 2-4, with 3 runs scored, Carter Gregory went 1-2, with 2 RBIs, and 3 runs scored. Gavin Fain was 1-2 with 2 RBIs. Jaiden Wilson, Noah Jessup, Jackson Horton, Calvin Lancaster, and Zach Holt combined on the mound for the win.



Hylton pitches no hitter

By Ashlee Mullis
Christian Hylton led the Cougars on the mound to a 2-0 win over Glenvar with his first no-hitter. On April 3, Patrick County hosted the Highlanders for the first game of Three Rivers District play. Hylton threw a gem with a complete game, no hitter. He faced 21 batters, walked 1, struck out 5, and gave up zero hits. Gavin Fain and Noah Jessup scored for

the Cougars, and Jackson Horton had 1 RBI. Coach Tal Swails said, "Glenvar pitcher, Cale Vaughn, only gave up 1 hit on the day. Seven complete innings of baseball and 1 hit combined. I've never personally seen it happen. The Cougar defense was lights out, with Erik Martinez, Zach Holt, Jackson Horton, Noah Jessup, and Easton Harris making plays all day. It was a fantastic baseball game!"

Gone Fishin' — Kids cast line for trout and prizes

The 5th annual Patrick County Kids' Trout Fishing Day will be held April 12 at the Mayo River Rail Trail Picnic Area from 9 a.m. - noon. The event is for youth 15 years old and younger. Adults ARE NOT permitted to fish until after 1 p.m. and must have a Valid VA State Fishing License and Trout Stamp. Adults who are helping children have a license. Children must be casting reels and reeling fish back in. Bring your own fishing tackle, bait and lawn chair. Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian; they also must be registered and present to win door prizes. For more details, contact Sandra Heath, Wayne Kirkpatrick or Dale Owens at 276-694-2911 or the Patrick County Kids' Trout Fishing Day Facebook Page.

Fishing Team Members Head To State Tournament

Twelve anglers from the Patrick County High School (PCHS) Fishing Team are headed to the state championship tournament at Lake Gaston, Saturday, April 12 and Sunday, April 13. Congratulations to Jonah Shockley and Hunter Heath; Caleb Geiger and Antwain Mitchell; Chace Handy and Will Heath; Tripp Thompson and Jacob Spencer; Jake Bryant and Logan Brown; Jazmyne Reynolds and Kade Williams.

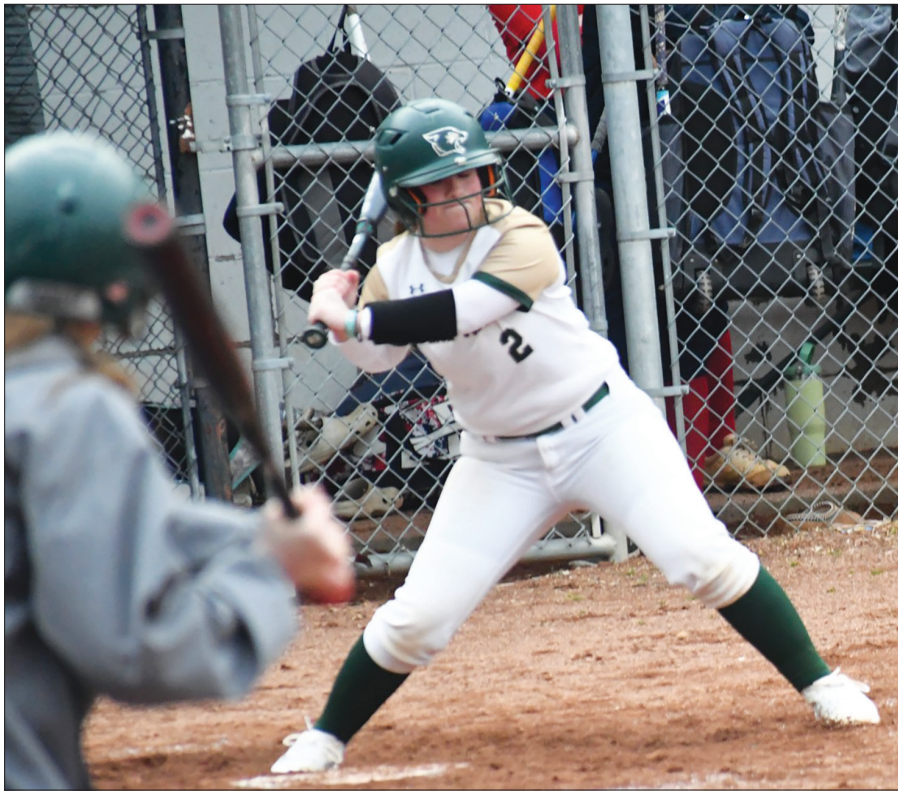
Girls Varsity Soccer Recap



Kyra Titular takes the ball down the field for the Cougars.

By Ashlee Mullis
On Monday, March 24, the Lady Cougars hosted Bassett, ending in a 1-1 tie. Sydney Tatum scored the goal for the Cougars. Skye Ayers had 14 saves in the goal.
On Wednesday, March 26, Patrick County hosted Dan River, getting a 2-0 win over the Lady Wildcats. Kyra Titular scored 2 goals for the Cougars, assisted by Camille Gonzalez and Cindy Leon. Skye Ayers had 5 saves in

goal.
On Wednesday, April 2, the Cougars traveled to Martinsville, beating the Lady Bulldogs 7-0. Titular scored 3 goals, assisted by Cindy Leon, Abigail Pendleton, and Sydney Tatum. Raeli Moran scored 2 goals assisted by Cindy Leon Cisneros. Sydney Tatum and Ashly Madrid had one goal each. Skye Ayers had 4 saves in goal. Camille Gonzalez had 3 saves in goal.



Lacey Sutphin hits for the Cougars.

PCHS Softball Team Beats Glenvar

By Ashlee Mullis
The Lady Highlanders Softball Team came to Stuart on Thursday, April 4. Patrick County defeated Glenvar 3-2. Jenna Woods was great in the circle, striking out 6. The defense played well, holding Glenvar to only 2 runs. Hayden Lawless had a hit with an RBI. Lacey Sutphin also had an RBI, and Journey Moore scored 2 runs.

PCHS Sports Schedule

The Patrick County High School Cougars Sports Schedule for the week of April 14-19:			4/17	5pm	Softball at Alleghany
				4pm	Track at Floyd County.
				4:30pm	Girls Tennis vs Carroll Co.
4/14	4:30pm	Girls Tennis at Alleghany		4:30pm	Boys Tennis at Carroll Co.
	4:30pm	Boys Tennis vs Alleghany		5pm	Softball vs Floyd Co.
	5pm	Softball vs Chatham		7pm	Baseball vs Carroll Co.
	7pm	Girls Soccer vs Alleghany		7pm	Softball vs Carroll Co.
	7pm	Boys Soccer vs Alleghany		7pm	Girls Soccer vs Carroll Co.
4/15	5pm	Baseball at Alleghany		7pm	Boys Soccer at Carroll Co.

Sports Briefs

By Ashlee Mullis
JV Baseball Beats Martinsville
The JV Baseball Team scored 6 runs in the 1st inning, helping them cruise to a 11-1 win in a 5-inning run rule game at home, Friday, April 2. Anderson Brim had 3 hits and 3 RBIs. Caleb Vaughn had a hit, 2 runs, 1 RBI, and 2 stolen bases. Noah Cain had 1 hit, 1 RBI, and 2 stolen bases. Jaxon Handy went 2 innings on the mound, allowing no hits, no runs, and striking out 3. Vaughn threw 2 innings, allowing no earned runs, 1 hit, and 3 strike outs. Jayden Corns went 1 inning, allowing no runs, no hits,

and striking out 3.
JV Baseball Gets Win at Glenvar
The JV Cougars got a 4-2 win at Glenvar, Friday, April 4. Patrick County scored 3 runs in the 6th inning to break a 1-1 tie in the hard-fought win. Jayden Corns had 1 hit and 2RBIs. Noah Cain had 1 hit and 1 run scored. Mason Cassell had 1 hit and 1 run scored. Mark Register got the win with 5 solid innings on the mound allowing 1 run and striking out 7. Noah Cain got the save, throwing 2 innings, allowing no runs and striking out 3. The Cougars are 5-0 on the season so far.

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Crossing the Lines

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

Sheriff defends deputy's actions during council meeting incident

Martinsville Sheriff Steve Draper said his deputy, Reva Keen, acted on what she believed were signals from City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides and Mayor LC Jones when she removed Councilman Aaron Rawls from a recent meeting.

“And that’s what she did. She was under the impression that was it,” Draper said.

He explained Jones “I think had just kind of looked at her, because she was standing near him, and gave the gesture of just nodding his head, and the city manager used her head and kind of just ... if you look at it (video), you can see it better than I can tell you. It’s hard for me to describe it, but you can see it,” Draper said of a video recorded by Caleb Robertson of What Does The Bible Say?



Martinsville Sheriff's Deputy Reva Keen

Keen, who serves as a bailiff in court, will not be disciplined for her actions, Draper said.

“My deputy followed what she was told to do. As far as we’re concerned at this point, we’re not going to do anything. Because like I said, looking at the video it’s obvious that there was a gesture made,” Draper said.

Keen was assigned to the meeting at the request of city officials after funds were found to

pay overtime. Her job was to keep the public from approaching the council, Draper said.

“Just like a courtroom, you just can’t pass the bar in the courtroom to come toward a judge or come toward the Commonwealth’s Attorney or anybody. Our people are to keep people behind the bar, and that’s our job,” Draper said.

“When we put this in effect, it was the same thing. We started it to keep the public, when doing their comments or they want to talk to the council, then you can’t approach the council. You give whatever to the deputy, just like we do in court, and the deputy will give it to the mayor. If the mayor wants to send it out to the rest of the members, that’s up to him,” Draper explained.

Rawls’ removal sparks accusations, conflicting accounts among city officials

The chaotic removal of former Vice Mayor Aaron Rawls from a March 25 Martinsville City Council meeting has ignited a firestorm of accusations, conflicting narratives, and concerns about government transparency and authority.

Rawls, flanked by council member Julian Mei, held a press conference on March 27 and alleged City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides of orchestrating his removal, and to criticize the council’s handling of controversial topics, including executive pay raises.

In response, city officials — including Ferrell-Benavides, Mayor LC Jones, Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson, and Rayshaun Gravelly — denied any coordinated effort to oust Rawls. They instead attributed his removal to a misinterpretation by a sheriff’s deputy attempting to maintain order during a contentious meeting.

The fallout has divided the council and residents, with Rawls, Mei and others alleging a breach of constitutional rights, while another camp condemns Rawls’ comments as disrespectful and disruptive.



Martinsville City Council members Aaron Rawls and Julian Mei held a press conference to discuss the March 25 council meeting.

The Incident

Rawls’ removal occurred after he indicated residents may not have been told their taxes and utilities would increase, “and now we’re talking about raising executive pay with your money. Raise the pay for somebody who’s making almost \$200,000 a year in the City of Martinsville,” Rawls said at the meeting.

At his press conference, Rawls said, “I knew Tuesday night was happening, it was no surprise to me. The level of coordination was absolutely criminal, literally.”

Rawls claimed he was removed from the meeting at the instruction of Fer-

rell-Benavides, who allegedly signaled to the attending sheriff’s deputy, Reva Keen, with a nod. A video of the meeting, taken by Caleb Robertson of What Does The Bible Say?, shows Ferrell-Benavides nodding her head twice in the deputy’s direction, then motioning her head sideways, towards Rawls.

“I wasn’t removed by the mayor, I was removed by the city manager,” Rawls said. “Civil rights violations are the most expensive” kind of civil suit. “They try to turn a room against you,” he said, describing what he characterized as a “stacked agenda” designed to suppress dissent.

Martinsville council hears proposed \$87.2 million spending plan

Martinsville City Council members heard a draft of the proposed fiscal year 2025-26 budget at its Tuesday, April 1 meeting, with proposed revenue of \$87,233,656 and expenses of \$85,874,519.

City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides said revenues are projected to decrease by 1.3 percent the proposal, while expenses are expected to increase by 0.7 percent.

“That gives you a difference of a positive of \$359,137. That would increase our fund balance, which would be our goal,” she said.

As of June 30, the projected unaudited fund balance is \$27,130,079.

The proposed general fund revenue is \$37,593,551 with its projected expenses being \$37,141,933.

Unlike most cities where about 80 percent of the general fund is used for personnel, Ferrell-Benavides said Martinsville differs with 55 percent used for city employees.

“As you look at the City of Martinsville, we have in this proposed budget 337 full-time (FTEs) and 81 part-time. Now, our end of the year estimate is 333 full-time and 81 part-time,” she said.

Edwards tapped to fill vacancy on school board

The Henry County School Board selected Valeria Clark Edwards to fill the vacant board seat in the Horsepasture District that was created due to a resignation. She will officially assume her role representing the Horsepasture District on April 3.

Edwards brings decades of experience in education and community leadership, making her a valuable addition to the Board as she works to support students, educators, and families across the district, the school board wrote in a release.

A retired educator with 28 years of experience in Winston-Sa-



Valeria Clark Edwards was selected to fill the vacant Horsepasture District seat on the Henry County School Board.

lem Forsyth County Schools, Edwards has served in multiple capacities, including as a Kindergarten Teacher, Primary Reading Teacher, Assistant Principal, and School

Bus Driver. Her career has been dedicated to fostering student success, ensuring equitable access to quality education, and mentoring future educators. She also served as an Adjunct Professor at Winston-Salem State University and has been actively involved with the Henry County Board of Elections for the past three years.

“We had several fantastic candidates for the seat, which we could not have gone wrong with any of them. We are excited to welcome Valeria Edwards to the School Board,” said Teddy Martin, chairman of the school board.



City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides presented the proposed fiscal year 2025-26 budget.

Constitutional officers include 88 employees, which represent about 26 percent of all full-time employees, followed by public safety at 25 percent, or 84 employees.

Utilities include 20 percent of employees; operations and infrastructure at 17 percent.

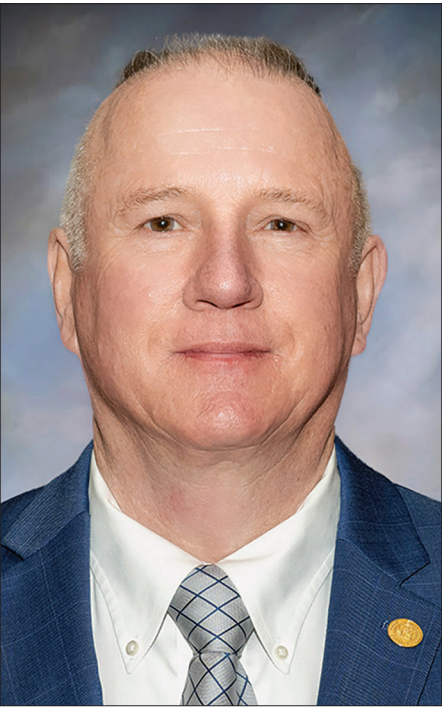
Incumbent to seek reelection in Collinsville

Joe Bryant, the incumbent Collinsville District Supervisor and current vice chairman, announced Tuesday that he will seek reelection in the November election against challenger Chris Lawless.

“As I look back on the past 16 years of serving this community, I am filled with pride for what we’ve accomplished together. Over these years, I’ve had the honor of working alongside many of you, listening to your concerns, and finding solutions that benefit us all. My experience has given me the insight to recognize the challenges we face, as well as the wisdom to understand the importance of moving forward—together,” Bryant wrote in an email Tuesday.

When he first joined the board, Bryant said his “focus was clear: to strengthen our community, to make decisions that would last, and to ensure that every voice was heard.”

He retains that same commitment, and is “ready to continue that work. I am proud of the work we’ve done as a team, and even more proud of the way our current board has come together. We’ve fostered a culture of collaboration, respect, and mutual support—values that have made us a stronger, more unified group,” Bryant wrote.



Joe Bryant, vice chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors, will seek reelection to the Collinsville District seat.

While there have been many successes, Bryant said “there is still work to be done. Challenges remain, and there are goals that still lie ahead. But I am confident in our ability to meet these challenges. With 16 years of experience and a deep understanding of the issues at hand, I know that we can continue moving forward, making thoughtful decisions that will benefit not just today, but for future generations.”



1-3-5-7-9



1-3-5-7-9



1-3-5-7-9



1-3-5-7-9



1-4-7-9:15

\$5 tickets

Hollywood Cinema
beside Walmart
Martinsville 276-656-3456

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BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

PATRICK PULPITS

“The Lamb of God”

By Thomas Shepherd
Pastor, Stuart Church of Living Water
John 1:29-42

In this passage John the Baptist points out Jesus to the people. The one mission in John’s life was to be the forerunner to the Messiah, to usher in the appointed time of the Lord. We see this in Luke 1:17 when the angel speaking to Zechariah (John’s father) said, “With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (17). John spent his life preparing the people for the one who was coming after him. His message was simple, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matt 3:2). All four Gospels attest to the fact that John is the one prophesied by Isaiah who is to prepare the way for the Messiah saying, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord,’ which is the quote from Isaiah 40:3. John’s one purpose was to prepare the people for the coming Messiah.

According to the Mosaic Covenant there were conditions that must be met. Specifically, the people must follow the Law and commands of God. This was a sacrificial covenant that required the offering of the sacrificial lamb for the covering of sin. Other animals could be used such as a bull, a goat, or even doves or pigeons. The point is this; the penalty for sin is death, so something must die for the sin. In the sacrificial system, the animal that was offered as the sacrifice was offered in your place.

In Exodus 12, we see the institution of the Passover when the final plague was about to come upon Egypt. This was the death of the firstborn. It was plague that would affect all who were in Egypt including the Israelites. The family in the house was to kill a lamb or goat, roast it in the fire and place the blood on the doorposts and the lintel. Then they were to eat all the lamb (or

goat) nothing was to be left over. If there were some leftovers it was to be burned up in the fire.

In John 1, John sees Jesus coming towards him and proclaims, “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). John introduces the Lamb of God. John didn’t say one of the lambs of God, but “the Lamb of God.” He is not introducing one of many ways to God the Father, but the only way. There is only one Lamb. Isn’t that what Jesus tells Thomas about himself later in John 14:6-7, saying, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him” (John 14:6-7). John introduces the Lamb of God. Here is the New Covenant.

John has accomplished his purpose and calling from God. John’s one purpose was to prepare the people for the coming Messiah. He baptized people for repentance and the forgiveness of sin. His calling was to point out the Lamb of God! Look at what John says about Jesus, John said, “I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel” (31). And revealed he was, at least to those who were looking. The mission of John was to introduce the Messiah.

Two times in this section John introduces Jesus as the Lamb

of God. We see it again in verse 36 where John declares to two of his disciples, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” These two follow Jesus. Important note here: If you want to know Jesus, you must follow him. These disciples of John wanted to know Jesus, so they followed him. One of them who followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon’s brother (40). Andrew finds his brother Simon and tells him “We have found the Messiah” (41). Isn’t it true that when you find something good you want to share that good news? Andrew wanted Simon to know the Lamb. As followers of Christ, we are to be like Andrew and lead others to Christ! We can’t save them, but we can point them to Jesus, the Lamb of God, and the savior of the world.

John’s purpose was to prepare the hearts of the people to meet the Savior and Jesus’ purpose was to open the way for the people to be able to return to God. He is the sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus is the New Covenant that God offers and not just to Israel, but to the entire world.

Romans 10:14 “But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?” As a follower of Christ that is our one thing we are to do – to point people to Christ, the Lamb of God.

BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. I Is the book of Haggai (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. Where does Jesus speak of separating the sheep from the goats? *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*

3. Who told Saul that rebellion was as bad as witchcraft? *Moloch, Mamath, Marduk, Samuel*

4. From Proverbs 18, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth ...” *Himself, Life, Good thing, Family*

5. How old was Moses when he died? *100, 120, 160, 190*

6. How many sons did Judah have? *3, 5, 6, 12*

ANSWERS: 1) *old*, 2) *Matthew (25:31-33)*, 3) *Samuel*, 4) *Good thing*, 5) *120*, 6) *Five*

Skyline Pentecostal Holiness Church
1515 Rock Church Rd.
Meadows of Dan, Virginia
Rev. Tommy Gosnell
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Sunday School 10 am
Worship Services 11 am

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Stuart
(actually in Patrick Springs)
276.236.7814
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Mass Schedule
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Reconciliation
Sundays 7:45 - 8:15 a.m.

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Sunday School for all ages 9:45 am
Wednesdays
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276-694-3440
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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Super Crossword

FROM ALABAMA TO LOUISIANA

ACROSS
1 Complaints to otologists
9 Foreboding
16 ESPN datum
20 Feelings
21 Alternative to chocolate
22 Rev gauge
23 Ailment
25 Bicolor whale
26 Poet Hughes
27 Tooth doctors' org.
28 Scarf down
29 Cantata's kin
30 "The Chi" airer, in brief
33 Alpo alternative
36 Things people run on
39 Coke and Pepsi's business?
43 Collide with
44 Robots in human form
45 "Fer cryin' out loud!"
48 Barkeeper on "The Simpsons"

DOWN
1 Conger, e.g.
2 Docs' org.
3 Decompose
4 Working hard
5 Quote
6 Magician Harry
7 Call a halt to
8 Atlanta-to-Miami dir.
9 Exiled Roman poet
10 Gruesome
11 Ballpoint fluid
12 S.F. NFLer
13 City in southwest New York
14 Long, loose overcoat
15 Airline to Sweden
16 Snitching sort
17 Kill pattern
18 Say "yes" to
19 "No kiddin'?"
24 Lip off to
29 Interoffice note
30 Wound cover
31 Academic A-lists
32 Ancient cuneiform language
34 Attaches
35 Deep thinkers
37 Retina locale

ACROSS
49 Audio game from Hasbro
50 Soothsayer
52 Off-limits
54 Farrow of film
57 Storytellers' leagues?
63 The "A" of ETA: Abbr.
64 Tech sch.
65 Some raptors
66 Vinaigrette alternative
67 Team letdowns
70 Apple tablets
72 Mild
73 Actor Koteas
74 Thighbone
76 Watering tube
79 Earth's star
80 Bivalve mollusk
85 1040 ID
86 Sock fillers
87 Instant, in some brand names
88 "— come to save the day!"
90 Blubber
92 Suburb of Buenos Aires
95 Etched computer components
97 Eight-note spans
101 Monty Python member wearing no jewelry or fancy clothes?
103 Topmost point on a perfume bottle?
106 Alan of "Tower Heist"
107 Blast source
108 Lindsay of "Machete"
109 Barney Miller player Linden
110 Sue Grafton's "— for Evidence"
112 Sallie —
115 Gung-ho
116 Like a shutter so shabby there's no point in putting in a new louver?
123 Head, in Nice
124 Attacks like a bird
125 Tombs for pharaohs
126 Greek strife goddess
127 In a very similar way
128 Cliffhanger feeling

DOWN
38 Home of Pago Pago
40 Seed case
41 Wee amount
42 TV host
43 Banks
46 Arctic boot attachment
47 Pawn
51 Approximate
53 U.S. soldiers
54 One of the Leeward Islands
55 Contained as a part of
56 Very pale
58 "— a pity"
59 Pottery piece
60 Downcast
61 Uno + due
62 Spy novelist
63 Smart — (wise guys)
68 Actor Elliott
69 PC key abbr.
71 "Pick up the Czech," e.g.
72 "Well, I'll be!"
74 Antagonist
75 Grades K-6: Abbr.
77 Longtime bud
78 Like cut bread
81 Many times
82 Gator's kin
83 Karate blow
84 Blue-green
89 Has no life
90 False appearances
91 Maker of Skin So Soft
93 Apt. units
94 True-to-fact
96 Finger-pointing people
97 Recently
98 Four-leaf —
99 One of the Windward Islands
100 "Dr." of insoles
102 Diner grub
104 Sine, for one
105 Actor Cary
111 Eensy
113 "Right away!"
114 "Game of Thrones" actress
116 Packers' and Panthers' gp.
117 Sugar suffix
118 Co- — (some apartments)
119 Sch. in Manhattan
120 "Hamilton" composer — Manuel Miranda
121 TV plugs
122 Mao — tung

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CLASSIFIED

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

All real estate advertised in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitations or discrimination based on race, color, sex or national origin," or an intention to make any such preferences, limitation or discrimination. Our readers are informed that all dwellings advertised in this paper are available on an equal opportunity basis. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate or employment which is in violation of the law.

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The County of Patrick is accepting applications from qualified applicants for the position of DMV Select Clerk. The successful candidate must have excellent computer skills,

be detail-oriented, and be willing to work with the public in a courteous and tactful manner in an often fast-paced environment. The ability to maintain strict confidentiality is a must. A high school diploma or GED is required. Applicants must be willing to submit to a drug screen and background check. Successful completion of training and a passing score on certification testing as set by the Commonwealth of Virginia DMV office are required for continued employment. Salary range is \$31,200 - \$37,500. This is a full-time position with 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. Overtime 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

YARD SALE

Yard Sale, 6-person, maybe more. Mini Flea Market, April 17th, 18th & 19th Thursday - 8a.m.-

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Hours: Mon-Fri 8 am-5 pm, closed 12-1 pm for lunch

3609 South Mayo Dr., Stuart

God Bless You

4p.m., Friday - 8a.m.- Collinstown Rd, Stuart, VA
4p.m., Saturday – 8a.m.- (Dry Pond area)
1p.m. Located at 661

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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email us
DHALL@THEENTERPRISE.NET



LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Patrick County Planning Commission will have a regular business meeting on Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 6 p.m. The meeting will be at the Patrick & Henry Community College (Stuart site) in the Community Room.

LEGAL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC HEARING: The Patrick County Board of Supervisors will hold a Public Hearing Monday, April 28, 2025, on the Comprehensive Plan Policies for Solar Facilities as recommended by the Patrick County Planning Commission. The hearing will be held in the 3rd floor Courtroom on the Patrick County Veterans Memorial building, 106 Rucker Street, Stuart, VA. Anyone wishing to view the resolution to amend the Comprehensive Plan Policies for Solar Facilities may do so at the County Administration office, Suite 218 located in the Patrick County Veterans Memorial building. If you plan to attend and have any special needs requirements, please contact the County Administration Office at 276-694-6094.

LEGAL

Meeting Notice
Patrick County Public Service Authority
Quarterly Business Meeting

The Patrick County Public Service Authority Board of Directors will hold a Quarterly Business Meeting on Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the 3rd Floor Court Room of the Patrick County Veterans Memorial Building. Petitions and requests from the public to address the Board shall be submitted in writing to the PSA located in the Patrick County Administration Building at 106 Rucker Street, Suite 218, Stuart, VA. Petitions and requests to address the Board shall be submitted no less than five (5) business days prior to the scheduled meeting and placed on the official meeting agenda in order to be considered. Persons wanting to address the Authority's Board not having submitted a pre-request to do so may only be heard after a majority of Directors agree. The Directors encourage public attendance at all meetings.

LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Town of Stuart will convene a Budget Meeting on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 6:00 PM. This meeting will take place at the Stuart Town Office, located at 100 Patrick Avenue. The Stuart Town Council will review the Budget for the Fiscal Year ending in 2026. Individuals wishing to provide comments to the Town Council who are unable to attend may reach out to Bryce Simmons, Town Manager, by telephone at (276) 694-3811 or via email at information@stuartva.org.

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

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC HEARING: The Patrick County Board of Supervisors will hold a Public Hearing, Monday, April 14, 2025 on the proposed relocation of the Russell Creek voting precinct currently located at 1808 Ayers Orchard Road to New Hope Community Church at 1863 Clark House Farm Road. The hearing will be held in the 3rd floor Courtroom on the Patrick County Veterans Memorial building, 106 Rucker Street, Stuart, Virginia. Anyone wishing to view the proposed revisions to the current voting precinct locations may do so at the County Administration office, Suite 218 located in the Patrick County Veterans Memorial building. If you plan to attend and have any special needs requirements, please contact the County Administration Office at 276-694-6094.

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

Saturday, April 12
The Carroll County Genealogy Club will conduct a workshop at Carroll County High School in Hillsville from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., with several speakers. No charge to attend, but donations are appreciated.

New Beginnings Baptist Church, 142 First Southern Drive in Patrick Springs, will hold an Easter Egg Hunt at 2 p.m. Food and refreshments will be provided. Call Sally Smith, (276) 694-7358, with questions.

5th annual Patrick County Kids' Trout Fishing Day will be Saturday at the Mayo River Rail Trail Picnic Area, Commerce Street in Stuart from 9 to 12. The event is for youth 15 years old and younger. Adults ARE NOT permitted to fish until after 1 p.m. and must have a Valid VA State Fishing License and Trout Stamp. Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian, registered and present to win door prizes. For more, call Sandra Heath, Wayne Kirkpatrick or Dale Owens at (276) 694-2911 or the Patrick County Kids' Trout Fishing Day Facebook Page.

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 Bullins, speaker, will share information about the H. Lee Waters film of Western Rockingham County. Books available to purchase, some at sale prices. The Board of Directors will meet at 1:30 p.m., before the regular meeting.

Patrick County High School (PCHS) Praise & Worship Team will perform at New Hope Community Church, 1863 Clark House Farm Road, at 6 p.m. Refreshments to follow.

Thursday, April 17
The Carroll County Genealogy Club meets at 5 p.m.

Friday, April 18
The community food truck will be at Fairystone VFD from 3-4 p.m.

Saturday, April 19
The Patrick County High School (PCHS) Senior Beta students will hold a charity car wash at Advance Auto in Stuart to raise money for PCHS students traveling to the National Senior Beta convention and competition in Florida this summer. Rain date is Saturday, April 26.

Country breakfast, 6:30-10 a.m., at Fairystone Volunteer Fire Department, 6687 Fairystone Park Highway, Stuart. Dine in adult plates are \$10 and child plates are \$5. Take out plates are \$10 each. To order, call (276) 930-2113.

Friday, April 25
Spaghetti Supper at Dobyns Community Building, 4-7 p.m.

Saturday, April 26
The Rockingham and Stokes County Genealogical Society's Spring Swap Meet, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Francisco Community Building/Volunteer Fire Department located on Highway 89 in Francisco, Stokes County, NC. Free to the public. Bring your family history information, family photographs, etc. to share. Printer available for a nominal fee. Please bring a covered dish. Authors or other historical or genealogical societies are invited to bring books to sell or set up an information table.

Ongoing

The Coffee Break Café hosts live music on Tuesdays from 9 to 11 a.m. Bring an instrument, 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 are used to purchase supplies. Members meet on the first Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Alzheimer's office, located in the basement of Hills Tax Service on Wood Brothers Drive. New members are welcome. For more information, call (276) 693-6018.

Two branches of the Alzheimer's Group LLC have been established — in the Vesta and Ararat communities. The Ararat group meets at the Fellowship Church in Ararat on the second Thursday each month at 12 p.m. The Vesta group meets at the Vesta Community Center on the third Tuesday each month at 12 p.m. Both groups welcome new members and invite caregivers to attend these meetings and learn how to deal with the effects of Alzheimer's Disease. Literature is also available.

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. Interest-

ed veterans are welcome to attend.

Free Community Meal on 4th Wednesdays, 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 music 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 confidential Medicaid/FAMIS application and renewal assistance for Virginia residents from birth to 64. No sign-up fees, no premiums, no deductibles. Medicaid renewals have resumed. Medicaid 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 information. Call or text Ann Walker, (276) 732-0509, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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.

Patrick County Parks and Recreation Department sponsors an aluminum bat co-ed adult softball league this summer, providing there is sufficient interest. A minimum of 4 teams must be registered and fees paid by the May 1 registration deadline. The league is open to men and women who will be 18 years of age or older as of June 1. Coaches are required to recruit their own team members. Each co-ed team must have a minimum of 10 players with a maximum of 15 players including at least 3 females per team. Team registration fee is \$300, and the completed team roster must be submitted to the recreation by the May 1 deadline. A copy of the 2025 adult softball rules and team roster forms can be requested by calling (276) 694-3917 or visiting the department's Facebook page.

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P&HCC partners with Influxer to boost student-athlete branding



P&HCC Assistant Athletic Director Ruthanne Duffy previews NIL merchandise for P&HCC athletes.

Patrick & Henry Community College (P&HCC) is partnering with Influxer, a leading platform for athlete branding and name, image, and likeness (NIL) management to provide P&HCC student-athletes with the tools and resources necessary to capitalize on their personal brands while balancing the demands of athletic and academic success.

Through this partnership, P&HCC student-athletes will have access to Influxer's cutting-edge

platform, which offers comprehensive services including brand development, social media strategy, contract negotiation, and financial literacy training. This initiative reflects P&HCC's ongoing commitment to empowering student-athletes both on and off the field.

"We are thrilled to partner with Influxer to create new opportunities for our student-athletes," said Brian Henderson, Assistant Vice President for Student Engagement and Athletics Director at P&HCC. "NIL represents a new era in college athletics, and our goal is to ensure that our athletes are prepared to navigate this landscape successfully. This partnership will give them the knowledge and resources to maximize their potential while maintaining focus on their academic and athletic goals."

Influxer's platform will also provide student-athletes with data-driven insights

to help them understand the value of their personal brand and connect with potential sponsorships, endorsements, and other NIL-related opportunities.

"Influxer is excited to work with Patrick & Henry Community College because Brian Henderson and the administration understand not only the immediate benefits of working with us, but also the long term resources for their student-athletes," says Keith Miller, Influxer Vice-President. "NIL is not simply transactional, but an opportunity which Influxer wants to further into the development process for their student-athletes."

P&HCC's partnership with Influxer underscores the college's dedication to enhancing the student-athlete experience and preparing students for success beyond their playing days. The program will be implemented immediately, with informational sessions and onboarding set to begin in the coming weeks.

For more information about the partnership and upcoming NIL programming, contact the P&HCC Athletics Department at bhenderson@patrick-henry.edu.

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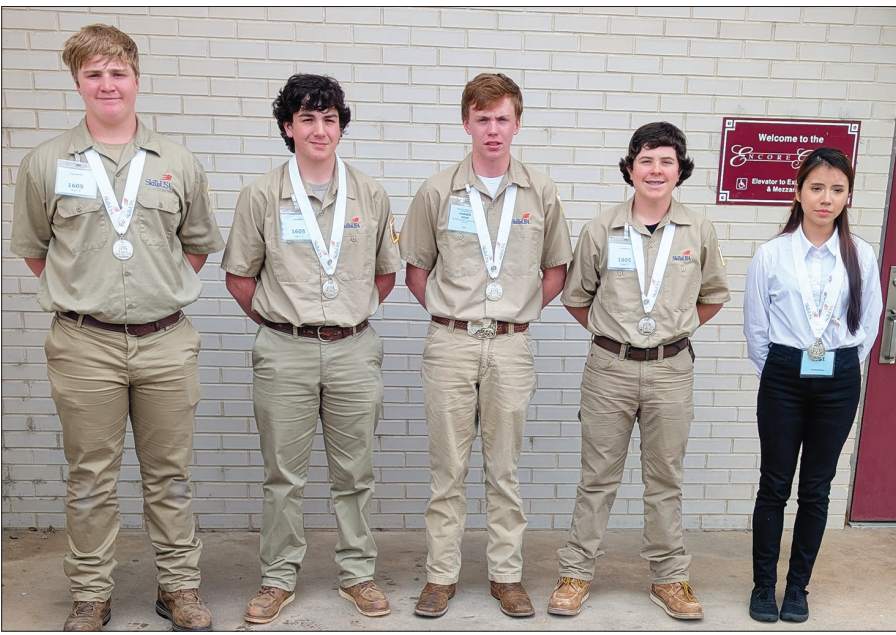
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Reggie Brown (left to right), Eli Wood, Parker Roop, Carter Gregory, Ashly Madrid

High School Students are State Runner-Ups in Skills USA Contest

By Ashlee Mullis

The Patrick County Building Trades and Cosmetology students attended the 60th SkillsUSA State Leadership Conference held at the Berglund Center in Roanoke, VA April 4, 5, and 6.

Building Trades students Eli Wood, Parker Roop, Carter Gregory, and Reggie Brown placed 2nd, winning the Silver Medal in Teamworks Building Trade Construction.

Cosmetology student Ashly Madrid placed 2nd, winning the Silver Medal in Fantasy Manikin.

Abby Royall, Eden Nickelston, and Bella Lemons placed 5th in Total Fantasy Look.

PCHS SkillsUSA Advisors Mrs. Melanie Culler and Mr. Philip Steagall said they are proud of their students for putting forth the time and commitment it takes in preparing for the contest. They would like to especially thank the parents and local businesses for their help and support.

'Goon Squad' finishes season undefeated, crowned co-champions

Patrick Springs Elementary School's 2nd-3rd grade basketball team, "Goon Squad," finished the season undefeated and emerged as co-champions on Saturday, March 29.




Front row (left to right), Jessely Diaz, Addie Cole and Katelyn Johnson. Middle row left to right: Landon Conner, Keenan Hill, Mason Fain, Landon Manns, Grayson Martin and Tristan Young. Back row (left to right) Coaches Kenneth Manns, Mike Young and Devin Hill.

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Laurel Hill’s Many Ladies: Betty Hobbs Perry

By Tom Perry
On October 7, 2006, John Broughton, President of the J. E. B. Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust, Inc., placed a granite marker at the flag-pole to honor Erie and Betty Perry that day. Here is what he said.

“It is indeed an honor and privilege for me to deliver these remarks as we honor the Perry Family with the first placement of a polished granite marker here at the main flagpole of Laurel Hill. This marker is placed in recognition of the many contributions by this family, not only to the formative years of the Trust, but to its continuation and indeed to its survival. Now, if you will permit me a small amount of humor to introduce the theme of my remarks, I would like to relate this short anecdote. Many of you, I am sure, recall the name of Rudyard Kipling, the famous English author of such works as Gunga Din, The Road to Mandalay and many, many more tales. Well, the story goes that it was circulated throughout London that Kipling was paid a shilling for every word that he wrote. So, a group of enterprising students at Oxford sent Mr. Kipling a letter containing a shilling and asked that he send them one of his words. The unexpected reply came back with one word, ‘Thanks.’

And that one word ‘Thanks’ is the reason we are gathered here today. Thanks to a family whose vision, dedication, and perseverance in the cause of insuring that this historic property known as Laurel Hill would never be desecrated by the presence of a private home on this lovely knoll, or heaven forbid a housing development, is at long last being recognized.

Every organization, be it the largest corporate entity or the smallest civic group, has to undergo a beginning stage. This stage of its life cycle is arguably its most important. For it is at this stage that the seeds are sown that more often than not portend success or failure for an embryonic enterprise. It was no different for the Trust that exists today. At the outset, I realized that my words cannot do justice to this subject, that it is an impossible task to adequately express here today what the contributions of this family have meant to both the Trust and to Laurel Hill itself. Perhaps the best thing I can do is to illuminate some of the sacrifices they made, to replay a few of the highlights of the important events in which they were instrumental here at Laurel Hill and some of their “digging in the dirt” physical accomplishments.

Now the difficult task before me is to try to condense what the Perry Family has meant to Laurel Hill. I have to ask that you turn the pages back to some thirty seven years ago to see a nine year old boy riding on the road to Mount Airy with his mother who sees the historical marker beside the road amongst the brush that says, ‘Stuart’s Birthplace.’ He wonders what it is all about. It was the point, that the family and Laurel Hill begin its journey together. For only a mother’s love and desire to support her son’s new found interest in history in general and James Stuart in particular could have stoked the fire that has burned to this day. Of one thing there can be no doubt that the contributions her son was to make in the years yet to come to save the Laurel Hill Farm from falling into private hands were a direct result of her willing sacrifice of time, money and sometimes great inconvenience to insure that his interest was fostered and nurtured throughout adolescence. George and Icy Bowman Brown, the then owners of the present day Laurel Hill were, I am sure, surprised to see this mother and son standing at their front door a little ill at ease. As the questions tumbled out of this little boy, George Brown being a quintessential grandfatherly type took him under his wing and spent endless days after that first meeting to walk over every nook and cranny of Laurel Hill with him and answered the endless questions that the imagination of a little boy engendered. As the years passed this little boy who had roamed Laurel Hill imagining that he was the reincarnation of a small James Stuart looking for a hornet’s nest to knock down, and riding bareback furiously over the hills, finished the education that Patrick County could provide. I am sure to his mother’s relief he matriculated at VPI majoring in history and studied under the renowned Civil War Professor James I. Robertson, Jr.

When the year 1990 arrived, it became apparent that the health of both George and Icy Bowman Brown was failing, and that Laurel Hill would soon be for sale. Thomas, along with other members of the Stuart Civil War Round Table set about to form an organization to raise the necessary funds to purchase Laurel Hill and thus save



this valuable piece of historic property for future generations to see and enjoy. This was an incredibly difficult undertaking involving almost every conceivable method fund raising during which time it is difficult to adequately portray the involvement of Mr. and Mrs. Perry who gave unselfishly of their time, money and just plain hard work to reach the seemingly unreachable goal of raising nearly seventy five thousand dollars. But they did. And the Trust was born.

In those early years funds were short, exhaustion had set in from months of back breaking travel in fundraisers and it seemed that the mountain had been climbed, and all the climbers were prostrate. Not so the Perrys. For now, when it was needed most Erie and Betty Perry kicked into high gear. They provided gravel for what was then euphemistically called a road, Mrs. Perry designed and planted a flower garden which graces the entrance to Laurel Hill to this day, and then in a moment of inspiration she planted the lovely forsythia bushes at the entrance whose yellow blooms herald the arrival of spring each year. In her words, Yellow for the cavalry.’ Her beautiful day lilies continue each year to brighten our scene as if they are there to remind us all of the lovely lady who planted them there. For these and contributions too numerous to mention we are gathered here today to place this memorial in honor of a family without whose generosity, time, and labor it is entirely possible that we would not have the ground to place it on. While the words “Thank You” seemingly are inadequate they are rendered from the hearts of all of us whose privilege it is today lead Laurel Hill into the future.

So, in closing, let me say the sobriquet “First Lady of Laurel Hill” rests rightly on the mantle of Betty Hobbs Perry.”

My mother passed away on February 28, 2021.



She was born outside Augusta, Georgia, on May 4, 1932, to Floyd Thomas and Elizabeth Prescott Hobbs, who preceded her in death along with a sister, Kathryn, and brother, Ed, and her husband of 63 years, Erie Meredith Perry. Betty was a member of Haymore Baptist Church in Mount Airy. She came to Patrick County in 1959 with her educator husband. She worked for Dr. A. K. Tullidgedge in Claudville before beginning a forty plus year career at Quality Mills/Cross Creek Apparel. She worked at Georgia-Pacific in Augusta for a decade before meeting Perry, who was stationed at Fort Gordon in the Signal Corps of the U. S. Army. They were married in 1957.

My mother got the idea to plant the forsythia at J. E. B. Stuart’s Birthplace from a John Wayne movie, She Wore A Yellow Ribbon. “Yellow for the cavalry,” she would say, noting J. E. B. Stuart’s role as a cavalryman in our nation’s history. Those plants blooming all over Laurel Hill came to Ararat from Augusta, Georgia, where my maternal grandfather, Floyd Thomas Hobbs, transplanted them and brought the flowers to his youngest daughter, whom he called “Doodely.” He and my grandmother, Elizabeth Prescott Hobbs, lived at 1815 Fenwick Street, and his house was a blaze of color, whether it was azaleas, roses, or forsythia. During World War II, he helped build ships in Savannah and worked as a mechanic afterward, but he had a green thumb. My mother later transplanted the forsythia to Laurel Hill. She cared for the flowers there until dementia that almost every woman in her family got, starting around the age of eighty, took her ability to care for the flowers. She grew up a few miles from the Augusta National Golf Club and went to The Masters for free while working at Georgia-Pacific. Masters week was special in her house, and it was for me this week when I saw the forsythia blooming at the place she helped to save: Laurel Hill.

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Blue Ridge Therapy, Landmark Center to Host Easter Egg Hunt and Spring Celebration



One of the joyous sounds of spring is the laughter of happy children hunting Easter eggs. Staff, residents, parents, and of course youngsters, enjoy the annual Easter Egg Hunt and Spring Celebration at Blue Ridge Therapy Connection and The Landmark Center.

Marketing directors Ashleigh Keeran and Lisa Martin have announced that the event will be held on Saturday, April 12 from 11-1. Among the activities for ages 1-12 will be a bounce house and obstacle course, free KONA ice for children (adults can purchase), games, and hot dogs and chips. Word

has it that the Easter Bunny will also make an appearance this year for photos and fun.

The egg hunt for ages 1-5 will begin at 11:15, followed by ages 6-12 at approximately 11:45. The 4,000 eggs that will be hidden will have candy and prizes inside, some even with cash! This event is free for the community.

If there is inclement weather that day, the event will be cancelled.

For more information, contact Blue Ridge Therapy Connection at (276) 694-7161 or The Landmark Center at (276) 694-3050.

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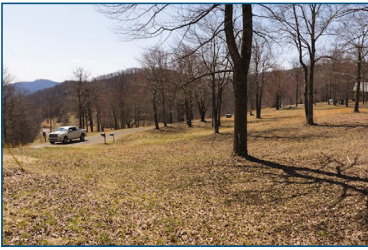
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OFFERING #3
This +/- 11 ac tract has rolling hills and is both a mix of wooded and open land. Property has not been perked. Underground utilities are already in place.



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Rishi Nair of Blacksburg High School won the 2024 Congressional Art Competition in Virginia's Ninth Congressional District. His artwork is entitled 'Mabry Mill.'

Congressional Art Competition in Ninth District underway

Each year, the U.S. House of Representatives sponsors the Congressional Art Competition for high school students, according to Rep. Morgan Griffith. This competition is an exciting way for a student from our region to represent the Ninth Congressional District in Washington. The Artistic Discovery Contest is open to all high school students in the Ninth District.

The chosen theme for 2025 is "Commemorating Virginia's Contribution to the American Revolution." Interested students must submit a photograph of their original artwork to either Griffith's Christiansburg or Abingdon offices by 5 p.m. on Monday, April 28 for consideration. Each entry must be accompanied by a complete student information release form to qualify.

The overall winner of our district's competition will be displayed for one year in the U.S. Capitol and will be invited to Washington for a reception. The second and third place selections will be displayed in my Christiansburg and Abingdon offices.

Art works entered in the contest may be up to 26 inches by 26 inches (including the frame) and may be up to 4 inches in depth. Artwork must be two-dimensional and cannot weigh more than 15 pounds. The work may be:

- Paintings: oil, acrylics, watercolor, etc.
 - Drawings: colored pencil, pencil, ink, marker, pastels, charcoal (It is recommended that charcoal and pastel drawings be fixed)
 - Collages: must be two dimensional
 - Prints: lithographs, silkscreen, block prints
 - Mixed Media: use of more than two mediums such as pencil, ink, watercolor, etc.
 - Computer-generated art
 - Photographs
- All entries must be original in concept, design and execution.
- The Congressional Art Competition began in 1982 to provide an opportunity for members of Congress to encourage and recognize the artistic talents of their young constituents. Since then, over 650,000 high school students have been involved with the nationwide competition.
- For more information on the annual Congressional Art Competition, call Griffith's Abingdon office at (276) 525-1405 or visit the Congressional Art Competition website.

Surry hosting annual Eggstravaganza on April 10



Surry Community College is hosting their annual Eggstravaganza, sponsored by the Student Government Association, on April 10, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Surry Community College's annual Eggstravaganza will be held Thursday, April 10, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Knights Grill Courtyard on Surry Community College's Dobson campus.

The event is hosted by the Student Government Association as a fundraiser for student needs including Angel Tree and Thanksgiving Care bags.

The community is invited to attend and enjoy games, music, an Easter egg hunt, and food.

The Easter egg hunt has been divided into age ranges and times: ages 0 to 3 at 5:30 p.m.; ages 4-8 at 5:45 p.m.; and ages 9-12 at 6 p.m.

Tickets to play the different games will be on sale with 20 tickets available for \$5. Food will also be available to purchase. For more information, contact Brittany King at kingbr@surry.edu or (336) 386-3656.

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