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

Board moves forward with administrator evaluation process



Board Chairman Jonathan Wood said the board was working to create an evaluation process that would be fair to employees, residents, and everyone involved.

By Taylor Boyd

The Patrick County Board of Supervisors approved a draft evaluation form to use when evaluating the county administrator in a 4-1 vote during its July 28 work session.

Blue Ridge District Supervisor Steve Marshall cast the lone dissenting vote.

"I originally asked for and agreed to formulate an evaluation protocol for the county administrator back in January as part of developing an overall policy and procedure in our county government," he said. "I did not agree to the evaluation as a contextual means of termination of any employee, so I vote no."

After the meeting, Vice Chairman Andrew Overby, of the Dan River District, said the intent was to create a document the board could use both now and in the future.

"We really didn't have anything up to this point. I can't really comment on what the evaluation criteria and everything has been, I just know that they've apparently never had a form or anything to actually conduct an evaluation," Overby said.

Chairman Jonathan Wood, of the Peters Creek District, said the board was working to draft an evaluation process to ensure fairness for employees, residents, and others involved.

While current administrator Beth Simms would be the first employee (See Board p. 3)



Fulcrum Literacy Co-Founder and Executive Director Kareem Weaver spoke to Patrick County school staff about the importance of the science of reading.

Teachers gear up for start of new year; classes begin Friday

By Taylor Boyd

Patrick County teachers returned to the classroom this week to prepare for the start of the 2025-26 school year, which begins Friday, Aug. 8.

As part of the back-to-school preparations, educators attended a presentation on the science of reading, led by Kareem Weaver, co-founder and executive director of Fulcrum Literacy. The science of reading refers to a body of research

that explains how people learn to read and the most effective ways to teach reading.

Weaver said reading instruction must support consistent language development across all content areas to help students navigate complex texts.

"If you're trying to get them college-entry ready for real, this has to be an everyday thing. This is the whole game right here," he said.

(See Teachers p. 12)



Volunteers will clean up and revitalize Fred Clifton Park in Patrick County, adding new park accessories and interpretive signage. (Photos courtesy of DRBA)

Businesses unite to fund environmental projects across Dan River Basin

Eco Ambassador Council backs five efforts to improve access, safety, and habitat in local communities

The Eco Ambassador Council (EAC), a coalition catalyzed by Carter Bank and composed of local businesses—including Blair Construction, Clark Gas & Oil, Frith Construction, Hooker Furnishings, Intertape, Jones & DeShon Orthodontics, and Pickle & Ash—has announced funding for five transformative environmental projects across Southern Virginia and the Dan River Basin.

These businesses work together

with their charitable investments to drive regional change by supporting initiatives that build community resilience, expand access to nature, protect ecological health, and promote economic growth.

Each initiative represents a shared commitment to sustainability, safety, equity, and the restoration of natural spaces—directly benefiting local communities while protecting the region's unique eco-

(See Dan River Basin p. 4)

Meadows of Dan Folk Fair returns Aug. 16

The Meadows of Dan Community Association invites everyone to the 21st Annual Folk Fair on Friday, August 16, beginning at 10 a.m. The event will stretch from Meadows of Dan Baptist Church to the Meadows of Dan Community Center.

As in previous years, the day will begin with local craftsmen selling their wares, including jewelry, wooden and metal crafts, and more. Windy Ridge Cattle Company will be on-site with meat for sale.

For book lovers, a group of local authors will attend to sell their books and meet readers.

"It's never too early to start planning for Christmas," organizers said, "and what better way than by purchasing gifts from local artisans?"

Outdoor Entertainment will provide inflatables for children, allowing parents to shop and browse the fair more freely.

New this year, Villa Appalachia will be offering tastings of its locally produced wines.

Event Highlights

The day's festivities include a play written and performed by Meadows

of Dan's own Christina Boyd Holland titled, "Girl of the Holler." Following the performance, The Country Boys will take the stage, along with musical acts The Sauerkraut Band and Whosoever.

Later in the afternoon, there will be an old-fashioned singing at Concord Church at 5 p.m., followed by a performance by Right Turn at Meadows of Dan Baptist Church at 6:30 p.m.

Be sure to check the Meadows of Dan Facebook page or flyers around the community for a full schedule of performances and locations.

Visitors can also stop by Jane's Café, where the Royall family will be making and selling peach butter the old-fashioned way.

Craft booths will be set up throughout town at locations including Poppies, Concord Church, Poor Farmer's Market, and more.

Food and Refreshments

Food will be available for purchase from the Meadows of Dan PTO's fish fry, Shan's Concessions, and the popular shaved ice truck will return to help guests cool down. Admission is free.

Black bears the focus of educational program in Stuart

By Taylor Boyd

Blue Ridge Heritage hosted a program titled Living with Black Bears on July 26 to educate the public about black bear behavior, habitats, and how humans can reduce conflicts with the animals.

Held at the Patrick & Henry Community College site, the event was presented in partnership with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), the Southwest Piedmont Master Naturalists, and the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA).

DRBA Assistant Educator Regina Flora, MS, VMN, led the session, which was attended by about a dozen people. She discussed black bear habits, the reasons behind their growing presence in urban areas, and steps individuals can take to prevent unwanted encounters.

Flora explained that despite their name, black bears come in many colors—cinnamon, brown, blond,



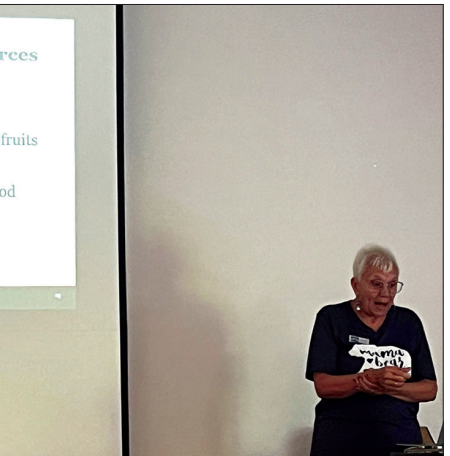
DRBA Assistant Educator Regina Flora, MS, VMN, led the July 26 presentation on black bears.

blue, and black.

"In our area of the country, they're going to be very black or a faded-out maybe black color," she said.

Black bears are found on every continent except Antarctica, she added.

"So they're not just in North America, they're everywhere. Be-



cause they're everywhere around the globe, that means there's more black bears in the world than any other kind of bear, because some of those have limited areas that they live in," she said.

About 75 percent of a black bear's diet consists of plant matter, such as berries, nuts, grasses, and fruits.

The remaining 25 percent includes insects, larvae, carrion, small animals, and fish.

"Any time that there's an encounter or a nuisance going on, it's probably because of food," Flora said. "They are driven by hunger, so the only thing on a black bear's mind is food, food, food."

In addition to seeking food, black bears also love water.

"You've probably seen clips on social media or in the news or something. Often people will look out and they'll be out in their swimming pools, they'll get in the kiddie pools, and then of course you can see them in the lakes, rivers, and places like that," she said.

Though they will eat fish, Flora said bears aren't typically fishing when they go to the water—they're just looking to cool off and play.

"They just love water," she added.

Flora explained that black bears (See Black Bears p. 13)

Chamber Chat



By Rebecca Adcock
Director Patrick County Chamber of Commerce

"Then came July like three o'clock in the afternoon, hot and listless and miserable." ~Allie Ray
 I think that quote pretty much sums up how a

lot of people feel about this year's summer and July. While our gardens love the rain, so have the yard and the weeds. Lots of things to get done around the house, but with the humidity, not a lot of energy to do them. Thankfully, the Chamber can work from the comforts of the air conditioning.

The month started off on a wonderful note with the great fireworks display that was provided by the Stuart Fire Department. Being a Blue Ridge Rising Ambassador, I attended the summit in Roanoke. This two-day summit covered everything from how local communities are learning to find alternatives due to their sections of the Blue Ridge Parkway being shut down either by the paving projects or the Helene hurricane damage, to lots of great new things to come with the Foundation's Blue Ridge Rising initiative. I look forward to working with the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation as we support our National Park and treasure.

The Fall Patrick County Magazine ad sales and article selection is coming along. We are once again projecting it to be printed and made available during the Patrick County Agricultural Fair in September. Remember to start work-

ing on canned items, quilts, and garden selections to enter the fair in early September.

We have had several meetings this month to help get us ready for the fall. Once August rolls around, it is a mad dash to the end of the year with community events. Go ahead and mark your calendar for the Chamber and Reynold's Homestead's "Lunch with Leaders" event. This year, the event will be held on November 12th.

August does seem to kick everything into high gear for the second half of the year. We have the last First Friday Summer Jam concert series, art take in at the Reynolds Homestead, Labor Day festivities with Front Porch Fest and Dominion Valley Park, as well as final preparations on the magazine. One other big event is Villa Appalacia's wine-versary on August 9. This event celebrates the seven years that the Block Family purchased and operated the winery. This year, they are partnering with Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation to raise funds to continue restoration work at the Mabry Mill complex. Come and enjoy some cooler temperatures along the Parkway that day and support a great cause.

For a complete lineup of events visit www.patrickchamber.com.



Library Manager's Report - July

By Somer Ojodeagua
Patrick County Library Branch Manager

I'm not sure who said, "In July, let the sun be your guide and adventure your destination" but I like it because it makes me want to search for the nearest library (Patrick County Library, of course) and find a book filled with magic and exploration. This July has been full of fun here at the Patrick County Library. The Summer Reading Program had 43 total participants this year ending on July 29, 2025, with a colorful water party where the participants and librarians could play water games, dance in the bubbles and eat watermelon and ice pops. Not a bad way to spend an incredibly hot July day. All participants left with a free book and fun filled memories of another summer reading program complete here at the library.

July also brought a new face to the library. Kaye Moorefield has joined our team as the newest circulation assistant. She enjoys meeting new faces and discussing books. The perfect addition to our crew.

Leandio, our Blue Ridge Regional Library, Program Coordinator, had his first "Boots on the Ground" line dancing class with seven lucky dancers. Dancers left the class asking about the next class. He is well aware y'all, that the interest is there. The Journaling Junkies had their final meeting on July 19. The numbers have not been great, so for the moment, we are retiring this program. Also in July, Sam and Emme hosted the 250th birthday of Jane Austen, which was not in July, but effort was made to have the tea party in 2025, so success! It was a great day with Jane Austen trivia, regency games and dress, scones, finger sandwiches and of course, hot tea. The weather was great, and the company was even better. On July 26th, Cindy Howe, of Rag-top Designs, volunteered her talent and expertise to show 13 people how to start their journey into watercolor art. She showed these budding artists brush control and how to mix the colors. We have another class planned for August

30. It was a great success. Gayle, our bookmobile librarian, mentioned having her September through April schedule out soon, so be on the lookout for her upcoming schedule. Who doesn't love bookmobile days!

July was fun and busy and we are looking forward to a "less hectic" schedule in August. Just kidding. I have added and rescheduled programming for August. We have moved Board Game Day to the second Friday of the month and are encouraging any and all to come out. This is a great opportunity for homeschoolers and newer people to the area to come out and play a game of UNO and visit. You can bring your own board game or use some of ours. Hours are 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and it's a floating game day. So come and stay and play.

The first Silent Book Club will be on August 7, from 5:30-7 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided. We will have bookish chat for the first 25 minutes or so, then find any place in the library and read the book of your choice. Who doesn't love to come to library to read! This club will meet the first Thursday of each month.

On August 20, author Pepper Basham will be at our library from 4-6 p.m. for a meet and greet. If you own one of her books, bring it for her to sign. I have mine on my desk already. We are very fortunate to have her stopping by and spending time with us, so I really hope we have a good turnout. This is a chance to meet Pepper and ask her questions about her books, or her writing style, or just to compliment her.

Our Senior Social Group will start on August 22, from 11 a.m. until noonish, and be held on the fourth Friday of each month. We will provide tea and a pastry while you sit and chat. During our first meeting we can discuss ideas for upcoming months.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns or even ideas about programming and our library, feel free to stop by and see me. I welcome new ideas and love to meet people. Stay cool and happy reading.

Grandparent scams meet AI

You get a call from a panicked grandchild or other family member. They say they're in a time-sensitive crisis—hospitalized after a car accident or jailed for example—and beg for immediate financial help.

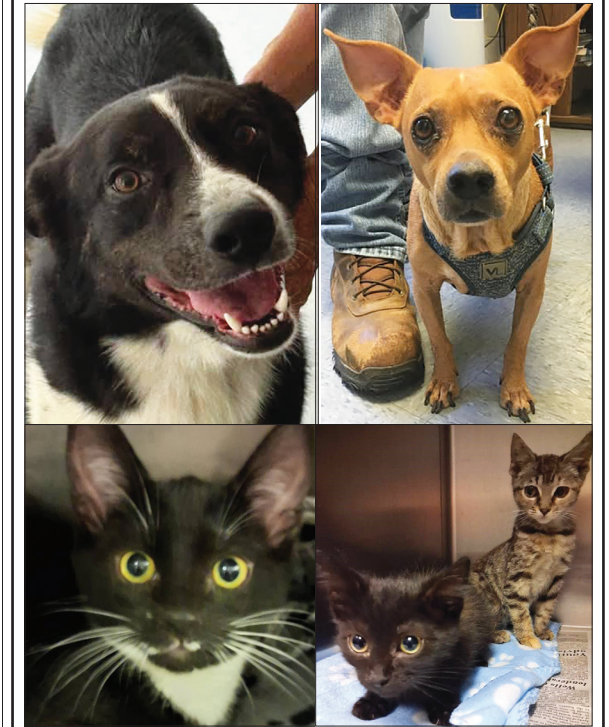
They may hand the phone over to someone they say is a police officer, lawyer or court official who provides detailed instructions for sending money via gift card, wire transfer, cryptocurrency or cash.

This is the beginning of the grandparent scam, and it's more sophisticated than ever. Criminals now have generative artificial intelligence tools to make the fake situation seem all-the-more real. But there is no emergency: It's a setup to steal your money.

If you receive a call like this, verify the situation by contacting your loved one directly using a number you know is theirs. Above all, if you receive an unexpected communication that puts you into a state of high emotion and involves urgency, let that be your signal to take an "active pause." Give yourself time to reflect on what you might know about the situation or to reach out to someone for guidance. AARP Fraud Watch Network™ is mounting an educational campaign to "Pause. Reflect. Protect."

Report scams to local law enforcement. For help from AARP, call 1-877-908-3360 or visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraud-watchnetwork.

Pets of the Week



This male Border Collie mix is young, smart and friendly.

Adorable little neutered male brown doggie, very sweet

This tuxedo female cat is friendly. There are black and tabby kittens available, too.

All pets deserve a permanent 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.

Check out videos and more pictures of these dogs and cats on the Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League Facebook page. The agency also provides pet food assistance and is always in need of pet food donations, especially cat food. Contact blueridgeawl@gmail.com for details. Visit the Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League website at www.blueridgeawl.org.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.THEENTERPRISE.NET

If you enjoyed the recent columns by Ben Williams and Holly Kozelsky, they are available weekly in the Henry County Enterprise

Get your print or digital subscription today by calling (276) 694-3101 or visiting henrycountyenterprise.com

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Arrests Reported

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office reported the following:

*Ashley Nicole Bowman, 31, of Stuart, was charged July 25 with fail to appear. Martinsville PD made the arrest for Patrick County.

*Teresina Kitchen Wheeler, 63, of Martinsville, was charged July 25 with probation violation. Martinsville PD made the arrest for Patrick County.

*Michael Patrick Carter, 52, of Stuart, was charged July 27 with threat in writing. Senior Deputy Doug Perry was the arresting officer.

*Crystal Link, 43, of Stuart, was charged July 27 with assault. Sgt. J.C. Fortner was the arresting officer.

*Jesse Wayne Harris, 35, of Patrick County Jail, was charged July

28 with two counts probation violation. Senior Deputy B. Fields II was the arresting officer.

*Norman Ray Johnson, 57, of Axton, was charged July 29 with three counts probation violation and one count fail to appear. Senior Deputy N.A. Wolfe was the arresting officer.

*Chrystal Gayle Hough, 38, of Patrick County Jail, was charged July 30 with probation violation. Senior Deputy M.R. Hodges was the arresting officer.

*Harvey Lee Edwards Jr., 24, of Galax, was charged July 30 with fail to appear. Deputy J.L. Fain made the arrest for Pulaski County.

*Ronald Scott Richards, Jr., 33, of Max Meadows, was charged July 31 with two counts probation violation. Wythe County made the arrest for Patrick County.



AITC welcomes applications for educator grants

Are you an educator who's always wanted to plant a school garden? Or maybe you want to organize farm-to-table activities.

Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom wants to help teachers integrate creative agricultural projects and learning experiences inside and outside their classrooms. Through its educator grant program, the nonprofit provides funding for teachers to expand children's understanding about the sources of their food and fiber, and how farming and agriculture impact their daily lives.

AITC will award over \$30,000 for the 2025-26 school year to support educator projects. Teachers and other organizations like 4-H clubs and FFA chapters that work with schools and parent-teacher associations can apply for up to \$500 for agriculture-related initiatives.

"Many students have little connection to where their food comes from, and these grants help bridge that gap," said Lynn Black, Virginia AITC's director of education. "Through hands-on projects like learning gardens, egg incubators and growing systems, teachers can bring agriculture to life in their classrooms. These projects also offer lasting educational benefits, with many being used across different grade levels and even among entire schools."

The deadline for grant applications is Oct. 13. However, applications received by Aug. 15 are eligible for AITC's "early bird" notification. This early decision lets educators begin their projects at the beginning of the school year. Instructors who complete the application early will be notified by Sept. 8.

Grant projects can occur at school, during home learning or in the community, and may include learn-

ing gardens, STEM integrations or unique agricultural experiences for students. Previous projects ranged from classroom hydroponic gardens to composting systems and student-led mini farmers markets. Some attended local Ag Day events, while others took part in farm-to-table activities—cooking produce that they grew.

Last year, AITC awarded 68 grants, totaling over \$33,000 and reaching 25,000 youth. One project was led by Emalee Owens, a kindergarten teacher at Fredericksburg Academy in Fredericksburg. She and her students built a schoolwide sensory garden with herbs and native vegetation for pollinators and wildlife.

"Our students participated in every part of our garden plan," Owens said. Through cultivating and harvesting herbs and native plants, students learned about plant nutrition, life cycles, insects and pollination. Academic lessons about the garden covered math, science, language arts and social studies.

"Most importantly, our garden helped students develop a deep personal connection to the natural world," she said. "All of our students enjoy picking herbs and viewing the wildlife that's attracted to the garden. These lessons will stick with them for a lifetime."

To apply for a grant, or to learn more about educational activities available through Virginia AITC, visit virginia.agclassroom.org/teachers/grants.

The Virginia Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that promotes a greater understanding and appreciation of agriculture through education and outreach activities. To learn more and support, visit virginia.agclassroom.org.

Letters to the Editor/Viewpoints Policy

The Enterprise welcomes letters to the editor and/or reader viewpoints of 500 words or less. Submissions may be edited for clarity, length, legal ramifications or general taste at the editor's discretion. We reserve the right to refuse to publish submitted letters for the same reasons. All letters must be signed by an individual and include community. Verifiable sources for information cited must be forwarded to the editor. Letters that do not meet these guidelines will not be considered for publication.

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

Board

(cont. from page 1)

evaluated using the form, Wood said the board hopes to expand its use.

"We have to start somewhere. There's no current evaluation that I know of," he said. "We're trying to make it a little more like a business, more like the school system, where evaluations are done regularly using a formatted method."

Simms has not yet been evaluated. She was hired for the post in September 2023 and officially started work on October 12.

During a retreat held in March, the board discussed the roles and responsibilities of the county administrator.

The draft proposal is currently under review by the county attorney to ensure legal compliance. Wood said he hopes it will be implemented within a month.

The proposed form uses a ranking system, where both the board and the employee self-evaluate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest.

Overby said the draft spans several pages and includes multiple evaluation factors.

Simms "is going to do her own self-evaluation that she will present to us. From that point, we will

all complete our individual evaluations based on what we know and the information that she provides," he said.

He added that all board members were given the opportunity to help craft the form.

"Everybody should be happy with it. Everybody had an opportunity to provide their input, so to me, there's really no reason for anybody to be dissatisfied with the form itself," Overby said.

During the work session, the board reviewed the form item by item, making additions and deletions.

"We can work on what we expect out of our employees," Wood said.

He expressed satisfaction with the result.

"It has input from our county lawyer and all of the board members. These are things that should have been done years ago that just weren't," he said.

Both Wood and Overby said a blank version of the form will likely be made public after it is finalized.

"Personally, I don't think that would be a problem. Of course, any specific details concerning the evaluation would not be made public," Overby said.

Applications accepted for agricultural program

Farm Credit of the Virginias (FCV), a lending cooperative serving Virginia, West Virginia and western Maryland, announced that they are now accepting applications for the second round of grant funding through their Agricultural Career Enhancement (ACE) grant program.

The goal of the ACE grant program is to support agricultural career development programs at postsecondary education institutions serving FCV's territory, including those in agricultural sciences, agricultural technology, agricultural education, agribusiness, conservation and more. The ACE grant program allows the Association to meet their mission to serve the agriculture industry by investing in the advancement of agricultural education.

ACE grants will be awarded for up to \$10,000 in funding. Funding will be considered for agriculture-related programs at postsecondary education institutions that are either located in FCV's territory or that

serve students from FCV's territory. ACE grants will not be awarded to individuals, private farms, cooperative extension or agricultural research programs. Additional terms and conditions are available on the print and online application forms.

ACE grant applications will be accepted August 1 through September 30, 2025. ACE grants will be awarded in November 2025. Applications and additional program details can be accessed at the following link: FarmCreditofVirginias.com/ACE

Brad Cornelius, CEO of FCV, said, "We are pleased to support the future of agriculture in our rural communities by offering this important grant program for a second year. We realize the great impact postsecondary education institutions have on the next generation of agriculture professionals and are proud to offer ACE grant funds to help strengthen those institutions' agriculture-related programs, which in turn will bolster the rural economy throughout our footprint for years to come."



Surry Community College is offering Notary Public and eNotary classes in August and September. For more information, or to register, contact Dr. Douglas Underwood, Director of Yadkin Center, at (336) 386-3584 or underwoodd@surry.edu. You can also register online at workforce.surry.edu.

Notary, eNotary public classes to be offered

Surry Community College is offering Notary Public classes in August and September and an eNotary class in August. All classes will be held at The Yadkin Center, 1001 College Drive, Yadkinville.

Notary Public classes are designed to prepare students to become a Notary Public in North Carolina. Topics include notary qualifications, guidelines, and processes for notarizing documents. After passing the course test, students are eligible to submit an application to the Secretary of State to become a notary. Tuition is \$71 plus the cost of the textbook.

The Notary Public classes will be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on:

- *Tuesday, Aug. 12
- *Thursday, Aug. 21
- *Thursday, Sept. 4
- *Thursday, Sept. 18

eNotary classes prepare a current North Carolina Notary Public to become commissioned as an electronic notary. An eNotary class will be offered on Wednesday, Aug. 20, from 8 a.m. to noon at The Yadkin Center. Tuition is \$71.

For more information about either course, or to register, please contact Dr. Douglas Underwood, Director of Yadkin Center, at (336) 386-3584 or underwoodd@surry.edu. You can also register online at workforce.surry.edu.

Thank you for reading
The Enterprise

Wagner, Bristol, and Baseball. Oh My!

As the second half of the Major League Baseball (MLB) season continues, there are noteworthy MLB events that merit the attention of the Ninth District.

First, Billy Wagner was recently inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Wagner, a Southwest Virginia native who pitched at Tazewell County High School and then Ferrum College (both of which are in the Ninth District), put together an incredible career after being drafted 12th overall in 1993.

Wagner's accolades include seven all-star selections, 422 saves (second all-time among lefties) and the highest strikeouts per nine inning rate in MLB history.

Wagner is the first Division III baseball player inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame!

Wagner is not the only player to be a part of the 2025 class, but the class he is a part of highlights just how special and impressive Wagner's professional career was.

Those in Wagner's class are MLB behemoths.

Ichiro Suzuki, the hitting legend with 10 consecutive all-star selections and golden glove awards, and CC Sabathia, the pitching workhorse who put together more than 250 wins, are two of the other inductees.

Wagner does not forget his Southwest Virginia roots either: during his induction ceremony, Wagner thanked his coaches from Tazewell and Ferrum for their positive impact on his career and life.

Wagner also wore a Ferrum College pin and Tazewell County pin on his suit lapel.

Southwest Virginia is incredibly proud of Wagner. His journey to the Hall of Fame inspires scores of young



Morgan Griffith

Representative

athletes and athletic programs in our region.

The weekend following Wagner's induction into the Hall of Fame, the Bristol Motor Speedway will host the Atlanta Braves and Cincinnati Reds for the first-ever MLB game to be played in a NASCAR stadium.

In 2016, the Speedway successfully hosted the college football game between the University of Tennessee and Virginia Tech. The "Battle at Bristol" drew in nearly 157,000 people!

That game holds the record for the highest single-game attendance in NCAA football history.

According to AP News, the largest crowd ever to see a baseball game was a 2008 exhibition game at the Los Angeles Coliseum. That game drew 115,300 people.

The Reds-Braves Speedway Classic may topple that record.

While it is the first MLB game to be played in Bristol, Southwest Virginia is no stranger to the influences of MLB.

Minor League Baseball has been a staple in our region for decades.

In the 20th century, Wytheville was the home of multiple MLB affiliates, including the Reds and the Braves! One of those players, Roger Williams, would later play for Atlanta and is currently a member of Congress.

Whenever he sees me, his greeting is: "How are things in Wytheville?"

The last game in Wytheville took place

in 1989, in a game between Wytheville and the Pulaski Braves.

Pulaski is home to multiple Appalachian League championships, most recently in 2013 when it was an affiliate of the Seattle Mariners.

In 2019, the Pulaski Yankees were awarded Minor League Baseball's top honor, the John H. Johnson President's Award.

The very first MLB affiliate in Pulaski were the Brooklyn Dodgers from 1947-1949.

In 1935, Pulaski's Calfee Park was built as a result of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal public works policies.

Pulaski is the current-day home of the Pulaski River Turtles, an Appalachian League team that plays in the summers but has no MLB affiliates.

Other teams in the Appalachian League include the Bluefield Ridge Runners and Bristol State Liners.

Some of these teams will feature local players from Southwest Virginia. At a 2022 Pulaski game that I attended, the starting pitcher for the Turtles was a Gate City native.

The Appalachian League has hosted future MLB talent, including Hall of Fame-level talent.

Look no further than Hall of Fame pitcher Nolan Ryan, who holds the MLB record for career strikeouts and no-hitters.

Ryan pitched for the Marion Mets before his rise to "The Show."

This year, Marion welcomed back baseball and is now host of the Hungry Mothers, a team that plays as part of an independent wood bat league for collegiate players.

Despite periods of instability in the baseball apparatus over the years, Southwest Virginia's love for baseball has not wavered.

The spirit of the game will continue to live on, likely inspired by homegrown success stories like Billy Wagner and record-setting events like the Speedway Classic.

Dan River Basin

(cont. from page 1)



The Woodland Trail bridge at Spencer-Penn Centre is set to be rebuilt, restoring safe, full access to the trail loop.

systems.

"These projects demonstrate the power of local action," said Tyler Carter, EAC member and community reinvestment administrator for Carter Bank. "Each one addresses a different facet of environmental health such as making nature more accessible, restoring ecosystems, or simply keeping people safe on the river. They're proof that with the right support, small communities can lead big change."

Teaching Water Safety

One initiative, Water Safety Education for All, is led by the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA). It brings free, beginner-friendly kayak safety classes to underserved communities in Henry County, Martinsville, Patrick County, and Danville. Participants, many of whom have never had access to formal instruction, will learn core river skills such as trip planning, boat fitting, paddle techniques, and Leave No Trace ethics.

Each participant will also receive personal safety gear, including river maps, dry shirts, waterproof flashlights, whistles, and multi-tools. The program is designed to promote safe recreation, outdoor equity, and stewardship of regional waterways.

Clearer River Signage

Also led by DRBA, the Play It Safe River Access Safety Signage Initiative will install more than 50 permanent, bilingual signs at public river access points in Virginia and North Carolina. The signs will feature paddling tips, emergency contacts, river condition guidelines, and environmental ethics.

Featuring universal icons and English/Spanish messaging, the signs are designed to improve safety for all users—including those with limited literacy—and enhance emergency response capabilities.

"With the support of the EAC, we're breaking down barriers—whether physical, economic, or cultural—to create welcoming spaces where everyone can safely and meaningfully connect with the outdoors," said Anna Wheeler, DRBA's recreation and stewardship manager. "The EAC is an incredible network of business leaders who truly understand the environmental needs and challenges facing our region and are committed to combining their resources to make the greatest possible impact."

Fred Clifton Park Revitalization

In Patrick County, EAC funding will support the Fred Clifton Park Renovation project to breathe new life into a scenic community asset known for its breathtaking overlook and peaceful setting. Volunteers will repaint worn structures, clean up the grounds, and install interpretive signs to highlight the park's geological, ecological, and cultural significance.

Located near the popular Lovers Leap scenic stop along the Blue Ridge Parkway, the enhanced park will better serve both residents and travelers, encouraging longer visits, greater engagement with nature, and a deeper appreciation of the region's natural heritage.

"We are excited to receive the grant," said James Houchins, Patrick County's director of economic development and tourism. "The Eco Ambassador Council's dedication to enhancing green spaces is a great service to local communities. I have often said that Patrick County has many hidden gems, and Fred Clifton Park is one! This grant will help keep the park fresh and inviting."

Woodland Trail Bridge Rebuild

In Spencer, the Woodland Trail Bridge Rebuild will restore a vital trail connector at the Spencer-Penn Centre. The deteriorated bridge currently limits access to a looped trail used by seniors, families, and individuals with disabilities for exercise, wellness, and education.

Led by local volunteers, the rebuilt bridge will ensure continued access to the only outdoor trail in Spencer that is fully accessible to those with mobility needs.

"After some major storms wiped out the bridge on the Woodland Trail, we are so excited to know that thanks to the Eco Ambassador Council, the bridge will be rebuilt and the full trail will again be accessible to our community," said Susan King Sabin, executive director of the Spencer-Penn Centre. "These partnerships are critical to providing the best resources and opportunities to our neighbors and visitors. Having beautiful assets only matters if they are accessible to everyone."

River Restoration in Stuart

The South Mayo River Structures Removal Project, led by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR), will eliminate two low-head dams and two sets of concrete bridge piers in Stuart. The outdated structures block fish migration, collect debris, endanger paddlers, and degrade habitat.

Removing them will improve safety and open nearly 10 miles of the South Mayo River to aquatic species, including the state-threatened Orangefin Madtom and lay the groundwork for potential reintroduction of extirpated mussel species. In addition to ecological gains, this three-week project will significantly improve safety and river access in Stuart — supporting eco-tourism, recreation, and a community-wide connection to the health of the river.

"The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources is incredibly excited to have been awarded grant funds from the EAC to support the removal of defunct structures in the South Mayo River," said Louise Finger, stream restoration biologist with VDWR. "These funds, in combination with support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Virginia Tech, and other partners, will improve aquatic habitat, fish passage, and safe, recreational use of the river."

Beyond the Checkbook

EAC support includes more than financial backing. Members will also be hands-on and engage their workforce to volunteer for some of the projects. As these five projects move forward in the coming months, they will collectively promote safety, education, environmental equity, and a deeper sense of connection to the natural resources that belong to the Dan River Basin.

"These projects show what's possible when local businesses step beyond the day-to-day grind and come together to invest in the shared future of our communities and environment," said Anna Lester, vice president of Clark Gas & Oil and partner at Pickle & Ash. "The EAC is more than just funding—it's about building a culture of stewardship, connection, and collective responsibility."

As these five projects unfold in the months ahead, their collective impact will ripple through the region—strengthening environmental equity, improving safety, and deepening the community's connection to the Dan River Basin.

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Patrick Pioneers

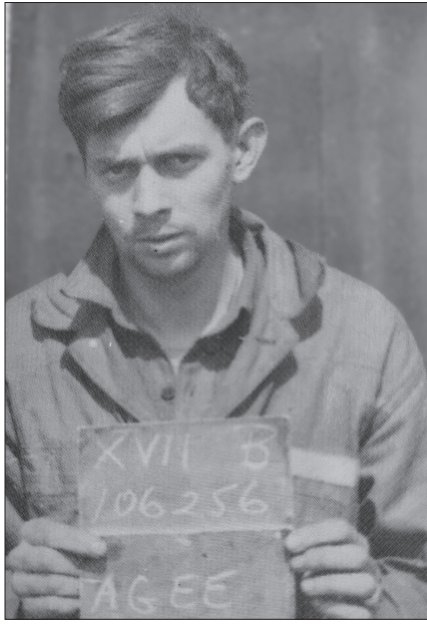
George Cleveland Agee, Jr. (Part Two)

By Beverly Belcher Woody

Last week, we left our story with the tragic news that Sgt. George Cleveland Agee Jr.'s B-24 Liberator, the Jackass Male, had been shot down by German forces on April 1, 1944. Sgt. Agee parachuted to the ground, suffering a severely injured ankle during his descent.

After six agonizing weeks, Sgt. Agee's parents, George Sr. and Eula Gay Hylton Agee of Stuart, finally received confirmation that their son was alive—but he was being held in the dark forests near Krems, Austria, at the notorious Stalag XVII-B, a German prisoner-of-war camp.

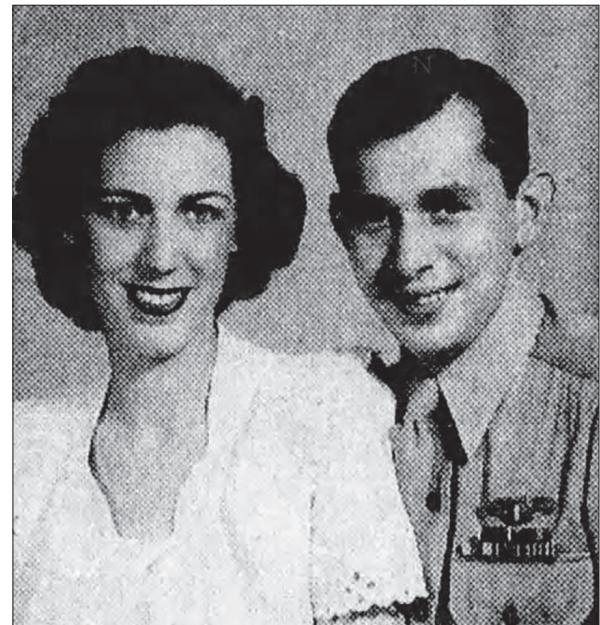
Sgt. Agee's eldest son, G. Steven Agee, recalls that his father rarely spoke of his time in captivity, except to say that he was always hungry. The horrors of this camp, like so many others under Nazi control, remained largely hidden until the spring of 1945. As General George S. Patton's Third Army pushed in from the west, Hitler's



Sgt. George Agee Jr. Stalag XVII POW. Photos courtesy of Steve Agee



Sgt. George Agee Jr. Stalag XVII Pow



Sgt. George Agee, Jr. and Eva Irene Baliles Agee

crumbling empire began to reveal its darkest secrets. As American troops liberated territory, they uncovered starving, emaciated prisoners—both political captives and Allied soldiers.

On April 8, 1945, more than 4,000 Allied airmen were forced out of Stalag XVII-B and marched west at gunpoint, prodded by the rifle butts and bayonets of German guards. The prisoners trudged through rain and snow with nothing to eat but the occasional uncooked potato scavenged along the way. Sgt. Agee shared with his son Steve

that, along the march by the Danube River, the soldiers had to step over the bodies of murdered Jews near the Mauthausen concentration camp.

Nearly a month later, the column of prisoners was ordered to set up camp near Braunau, Austria. The German guards remained in control until the night before the long-awaited jeeps and tanks of the 13th Armored Division rolled into the area, bringing liberation at last. The starving men had marched 281 miles in 18 days.

Life began to change quickly after Sgt.

Agee's liberation. The Martinsville Bulletin reported on June 13, 1945, that the Red Cross had notified Mr. and Mrs. Agee that their son, Tech. Sgt. George C. Agee Jr., had been freed.

Only four days later, Sgt. Agee and his childhood sweetheart, Miss Eva Irene Baliles, were married at Stuart Baptist Church by Reverend Robert J. Mann.

Eva was the daughter of James Lee Baliles and Martha Emma Shelton Baliles, who lived on Route 8 near Wood's Cold Storage. James Lee Baliles was the son of John Henry

Baliles and Mary Jeanette Morrison, and Martha Emma Shelton was the daughter of James Henry Shelton and Wilmouth Walker, all of the Buffalo Ridge area. Eva was the fifth of seven children born to James and Martha Shelton Baliles:

Carrie Ellen Baliles (1912–2002)

Mary Addieleene Texas Baliles (1915–1991)

James Curtis Baliles (1916–2009)

Syrus Lee Baliles (1919–1967)

Eva Irene Baliles (1921–2019)

Dorothy Mae Baliles (1923–2018)

Herman Shelton Baliles (1928–1941)

Next week, we will look at the accomplishments of Sgt. Agee after the war. I am deeply grateful for the contributions of Agee's son, G. Steven Agee, in bringing this remarkable story to light.

His courage, resilience, and sacrifice stand as a shining example of the Greatest Generation—one whose legacy continues to inspire us all.

For questions, comments, or story ideas, Beverly Woody may be reached at rockcastlecreek1@gmail.com or 276-692-9626.

Social Security Matters

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

Ask Rusty - Why Hasn't My SS Benefit Changed Because I Am Still Working?

Dear Rusty: I am currently receiving Social Security benefits while continuing to work full time. There are no restrictions on my wage earnings because I waited until full retirement age before beginning benefits. However, I was also told that my benefit amount would be reviewed each year if my current earnings were higher than past earnings. That held true for the first two years but has yet to be adjusted for 2025. I thought it might be because of HR 82, which does not impact me directly, but I think it may be the reason my payment has not yet been changed. Has enough time passed so I should contact SSA now to see

if this is the case? Signed: Waiting Anxiously

Dear Waiting: If you are already collecting benefits, Social Security reviews your earnings each year to see if your more recent earnings are high enough to warrant an increase in your monthly benefit. They do this automatically, after they get your most recent earnings data from the IRS, and they typically do that review by the end of the 3rd quarter of each year. If a higher benefit is indicated, they will increase your monthly amount and pay you retroactively to the beginning of the year for any difference in your benefit.

SSA has, indeed, been vigorously working on changes resulting from HR82 (the Social Security Fairness Act), which may have affected the timeliness of their review of your recent earnings. However, I suspect that is not why your SS benefit has not yet changed.

More likely, it has to do with the fact that your past earnings have been adjusted for inflation (which is a normal part of Social Security's process when calculating your benefit amount). Your earnings for each year in your lifetime (up to age 60) were adjusted for inflation when you originally claimed SS, and your recent earnings would need to be higher than the inflation-adjusted amounts used by SS when you claimed. They use the 35 highest earnings years (adjusted for inflation) over your lifetime to calculate your benefit, and inflation has a substantial effect. For example, \$50,000 earned in 1990 would require over \$100,000 in earnings today to cause an increase in your benefit. Thus, you cannot go by the actual dollars you earned in earlier years, because SS uses inflated amounts to calculate your benefit.

In any case, if you believe that the Social Security Administration

neglected reviewing your earnings from last year, or in any year since you claimed, you can make an appointment to review that with them by calling 1.800.772.1213. SSA typically does such appointments over the phone, so you likely won't need to make a personal visit to your local SSA office to investigate this.

This article is intended for informational 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.

Canning and Safety

The purpose of canning is obviously to preserve food for later consumption. In terms of safety, the same things that cause foods to spoil (such as molds or bacteria) are also responsible for making us sick. The heat and/or pressure in the cooking process is able to destroy the largest expected number of heat-resistant microorganisms in the canned foods. Then, the sealed jars keep any more from getting in.

Just cleaning food is not enough. First of all, bacteria, yeasts, and molds are difficult to remove from food surfaces. E.g. washing does not have much effect. Peeling certain fruits and vegetables can help reduce the count of microorganisms, but it will not prevent spoilage. However, the most important safety step by far is cooking the food hot enough and long enough to destroy any lurking microbes.

Botulism, a rare but deadly form of food poisoning, is a concern that many people have with home-canned food. Botulism is caused by rapid growth of the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. Although botulism spores are found on most fresh food surfaces, they do not normally present a danger because they only grow in the absence of air. The conditions of a can give the spores a chance to grow and produce a potent toxin.

The best way to prevent botulism or another form of food poisoning is to follow a tested recipe. Most importantly, the recipe needs to follow the current canning guidelines. Outdated cookbooks or recipes handed down by friends or relatives can be dangerous, as many do not follow up-to-date scientific guidelines. Howev-

er, you can easily find the current guidelines on the National Center for Home Food Preservation's website and make the necessary changes (the website is funded by the USDA).

Another important factor in canning is food acidity. Acidic foods, like many fruits or pickles (due to the added vinegar) aid in preventing bacteria growth. Acidity in certain foods is often increased by adding lemon juice, citric acid, or vinegar. In canning, high acid foods are considered to be foods with a PH of 4.6 or lower. These foods include fruits, pickles, sauerkraut, jams, jellies, and fruit butters. Tomatoes are often considered high acid, however select varieties are known to be less acidic. To be safe, experts recommend adding 2 tablespoons of lemon juice per quart of tomatoes canned.

High acid foods can be canned using a simple water bath technique. Low acid foods must be canned using a pressure canner, which is a slightly longer and more complex process. The pressure canner allows the food to reach a core temperature of 240 °F, which is needed for low acid foods. The water bath method is only capable of reaching 212 °F. For food safety, it is very important that you use a pressure canner with low acid foods.

Some people are wary of using the pressure canning method because they have heard horror stories from an older relative about canners exploding or spraying hot steam all over the place. In truth, poor quality canners or an improper following of instructions likely caused the majority of these accidents. Mod-

ern pressure canners are very safe, provided they are used according to the manufacturers' operating instructions. We can't emphasize this enough, read the manual and follow the instructions. It is also important to inspect the canner before each use to make sure all the parts are not damaged and working properly.

One final note about pressure canning: there is a difference between pressure canners and pressure cookers. While pressure canners are, obviously, designed for canning, not all pressure cookers are safe for canning use. If your pressure cooker can be safely used for canning, the manufacturer's instructions will say so.

Another thing people may not realize is that boiling times change with altitude. At higher altitudes, atmospheric pressure is reduced. In turn, the reduced atmospheric pressure causes water to boil at lower temperatures than normal. To compensate for this temperature difference, canning time or pressure must be increased. Canning books should all include altitude adjustment charts, or they can be easily found online.

In summary, canning is a very safe process. Provided you follow a safe, tested recipe and other precautions, you should not have any problems canning. Furthermore, it is a great learning experience to involve your children or other family members in. We hope you'll be able to start canning soon!

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

Crossing the Lines

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

Career Academy launches EMT program to meet local emergency services shortage

Big projects, bigger bets: County's development value soars



The Career Academy's ambulance simulator is designed to offer students a realistic experience of working in tight, high-pressure emergency situations. (Contributed)

The Career Academy is partnering with Henry County Public Safety to offer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification courses to high school students in Henry County Public Schools. The initiative was launched in response to a growing shortage of emergency services personnel in the area.

Melissa Hubbard, the course instructor, emphasized the urgent need.

"We are in an extreme deficit for EMS providers in the area," she said. "It seems to be an ongoing problem, not just for our area, but everywhere. EMTs—there are just not enough of them to go around. I think it's great getting the students in here young to fill those voids in the healthcare system."

Hubbard has worked in EMS for 13 years, 11 of those as a paramedic. She previously taught the paramedic program at Patrick & Henry Community College.

Career Academy Coordinator Brittny Brummitt said the school system offered EMT certification about a decade ago and saw a new opportunity to meet both student and community needs by bringing it back.

"They wanted to bring it back just because of the need in the area for emergency responders," Brummitt said. "EMT is kind of the basis for everything. If you're wanting to do public safety—like firefighting—you need to have EMT as well in our area."

Parents charged in infant abuse case; SWAT ends armed standoff in Collinsville

Two parents have been charged with felony child abuse and neglect following an alleged assault on an 8-month-old child, which led to a day-long manhunt and a SWAT standoff in Collinsville, according to the Henry County Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Wayne Davis said the investigation began in the early morning hours of July 24, when deputies responded to a home on Norwood Drive for a reported assault and neglect of an infant. Upon arrival, deputies took the child's mother, Nikki Angelina Walker, 32, into custody. She is being held at the Henry County Adult Detention Center on a \$4,000 secured bond.

The child's father, Chase Thomas Fielder, 32, allegedly fled the scene before deputies arrived. Authorities



A section of the exterior wall is missing from a home on Norwood Drive following a standoff on July 24, which ended with the arrest of Chase Thomas Fielder.

issued arrest warrants for both parents on charges of felony abuse and neglect of a child, and deputies began searching for Fielder.

Later that evening, at approximately 7:59 p.m., investigators received information

that Fielder was at 63 Norwood Drive in Collinsville. Deputies responded to the residence, where Fielder allegedly slammed the door and began barricading himself inside in an attempt to avoid arrest.

itics runs in her family. "My father was in politics for 34 years," she said of S.E. Moran, who served on the Henry County Board of Supervisors. "I guess politics is in my blood, and that's why I decided to run," she said. "I'm hoping that I can help make a difference."

If elected, Vestal said she plans to support all school employees and ensure they feel heard.

"I have friends that still work at the central office that say things are better than they've ever been," she said. "Then I have people that work in the buildings that tell me they feel like they're not being heard."



She said she was inspired to run after Auker told her he did not plan to seek another term.

"The more I thought about it, the more I thought that's what I needed to do," she said.

Vestal added that pol-



Progress on the expansion of the Press Glass facility in the Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre is visible in this aerial photo. The company announced the \$155.2 million capital investment on Aug. 30, 2023. Press Glass first announced plans to locate in Henry County in 2018.

While the number of building permits in Henry County has remained relatively steady over the last decade, the value of new development is rising sharply — a sign of growing investor confidence and larger, more ambitious projects.

From 2015 to 2020, the county issued 5,333 permits representing just over \$385 million in development activity. Since 2021, only 4,356 permits have been issued, but the total project value has jumped to more than \$687 million, before adjusting for inflation. When adjusted for inflation, the post-2020 total rises to over \$742 million — a nearly 49 percent increase in real investment compared to the previous five-year period.

The average value per permit

has more than doubled, from roughly \$72,000 between 2015 and 2020 to more than \$158,000 since 2021, also before adjusting for inflation.

This shift can be attributed to several factors including enhanced site readiness, consistent tax policy, and a long-term commitment to supporting economic development.

"These numbers reflect the wisdom of the board's forward-looking investments," said Jim Adams, chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors. "From preparing sites for major employers to keeping taxes low and maintaining a stable business climate, we've focused on creating an environment that allows growth to take root. We are now seeing the results."

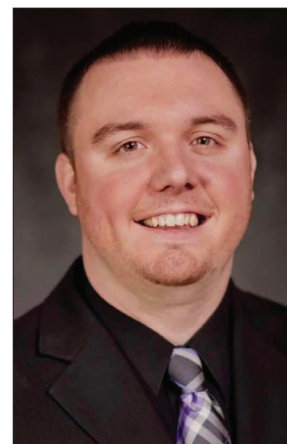
Martin enters school board race in Blackberry District

Jonathan Martin is running for the Blackberry District seat on the Henry County School Board, motivated in part by bullying his daughter experienced last year.

He will face Sherry Vestal in the November election. Incumbent Thomas Auker is not seeking re-election.

Martin, 36, said his daughter was bullied at school around the same time as a case in Roanoke, where a young girl died by suicide following similar mistreatment.

"Right around then, something just spoke to me and was like, 'You know, maybe this is an opportunity for you to get in there and



see what you can do," he said. "Just having a daughter in the school system, having nephews in the school system, and just wanting to see if there's something we can do to make it—obviously you can't eliminate bullying altogether—but to try to make it a safe, fun environment for them to learn in."

Martin said he still has a lot of campaigning to do and plans to connect with local residents about their concerns.

"I don't want to make any promises because I don't know what's in my power yet," he said. "This, of course, would be my first elected position, so I don't know limitations or what that looks like."

Martin noted some of his goals include being an advocate for students' success to ensure they can get the best education possible, being the support that teachers, administrators, and support staff need, and working to keep the schools safe.

Vestal seeks Henry County School Board seat

Sherry Vestal is running for the Blackberry District seat on the Henry County School Board in the November election.

She will face Jonathan Martin in the race. Incumbent Tom Auker is not seeking re-election.

Vestal, who retired three years ago, worked for the school division for 34 years as a school nurse and school nurse coordinator.

"Henry County has a great school division, otherwise I would not have stayed 34 years," she said. "I want employees to feel that they can speak and voice their concerns with total support."

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Wesley Towler Tatum

Wesley Towler Tatum, 59, of Stuart went to his heavenly home on August 1, 2025 after a courageous battle against cancer. Despite the challenges he faced over the past year, he always kept a positive outlook and never complained or stopped smiling.

He is preceded in death by his parents, David Towler and Sally Rogers Tatum and grandparents, Towler and Pearl Tatum and Wesley and Rachel Rogers. Surviving is his devoted and loving soulmate and childhood sweetheart of 40 1/2 years, Sharon Clark Tatum, of the home. He spoke constantly of how blessed he was to have her and how hard she worked to care for him during this battle. He is also survived by his children Cassandra Tatum Carter (Kevin) of Walkertown, NC and Cameron Patrick Tatum (Rachel) of Stuart, VA; grandsons, Everett Samuel Carter, Elijah Wesley Carter, and Da-



vid Cameron Tatum; brother, David Patrick Tatum of Stuart, VA; mother-in-law, Ruby Clark of Stuart, VA; and brother- and sister-in-law, Duane and Sandra Sloan of Greensboro, NC.

Those who knew Wesley knew his joy, his unwavering devotion, and how well he served others. He loved and served the Lord wholeheartedly and was a devoted member of New Hope Community Church. He truly embodied the fruits of the Spirit and led his family so well in these values. He adored his community and was

always willing to lend a helping hand. He was so excited each year to create and orchestrate his Christmas light display for his community to enjoy. He had the ability to make friends with anyone and created so many of these treasured friendships throughout his years at Bassett Walker and Belews Creek Steam Station. He leaves a wonderful legacy and will be dearly missed.

The funeral service will be held on Monday, August 4th at 11am at Moody Funeral Home with Pastor Mark Collins officiating. Family will receive friends starting at 9:30am. Burial will follow at the Tatum Family Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the PARC Workshop, 674 Wood Brothers Drive, Stuart, Virginia 24171 and the Tatum Family Cemetery, c/o Kim Harris, 4949 Ayers Orchard Road, Stuart, Virginia 24171.

Claude Henry Morrison

Claude Henry Morrison, age 98, went to be with the Lord at his home in Richmond, Virginia on July 27, 2025. He was born in Patrick County, Virginia to the late Henry and Fannie Belcher Morrison. He was predeceased by just three months by his beloved wife of seventy-one years, Jessie Barnard Morrison. Also predeceased by four sisters: Ruth Bennett, Annie Pilson, Eva DeHart and Minnie Mangrum; two brothers: Amos Morrison and James Morrison. He received his education at Ferrum College, Ferrum, Virginia and Radford University Radford, Virginia studying with outstanding piano teachers. He had a passion for music and teaching others to play the piano. He taught piano privately for more than forty years. His piano teaching career began in Stuart, Virginia where he became highly successful as a sought-out professional and attracted students throughout Patrick County. Later he moved to Fairfax, Virginia where his teaching career flourished. He was recognized as an outstanding piano teacher by the National Guild of Piano Teachers, the largest nonprofit organization of piano teachers and students in the world. He prepared his students



caregivers who were their angels.

Claude is survived by two daughters: Celia Morrison, Greta Skeen and husband Greg; and one son, Eric Morrison; all in Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina; two grandchildren; Aaron Skeen and wife Rebecca, Lynchburg, Virginia, and Harry Skeen, Nashville, Tennessee; and four great-grandchildren: Max, Nora, Henry, and Emma Skeen, Lynchburg, Virginia. In addition, he is survived by two sisters: Dr. Marie Brink, Pompano Beach, Florida and Nancy Martin Laurel Fork, Virginia; his very special Godson, Robert Pugh, Atlanta, Georgia; and many nieces and nephews.

Claude leaves a legacy of love. He lived a life rooted in love, and that enduring love continues to grow in the many lives he touched, especially his beloved family.

A funeral service for Mr. Morrison will be held Saturday, August 2, 2025 at 2:00 P.M. at Meadows of Dan Baptist Church with Pastor Shawn Carter officiating. Burial will immediately follow in the church cemetery. Family will receive friends following the service in the fellowship hall of the church. Online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Record-level funding allocated for conservation practices in fourth consecutive year of increases

A dollar amount cannot be placed on the value of clean water and healthy soil, but a \$16 million increase to the fully funded Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share program is a welcome budgetary consideration among farmers and conservationists alike.

This is the fourth consecutive year of increased funding for the program, with \$223 million allocated to the VACS program for fiscal year 2026. This marks a \$16 million increase over last year's funding threshold of \$207 million.

The VACS program helps farmers offset the cost of implementing a wide range of eligible best management practices with reimbursement up to 100%.

Farmers can receive up to \$300,000 in state cost-share reimbursement for over 60 best management practices. BMPs include cover cropping, nutrient management, livestock stream exclusion, forested or herbaceous buffers or rotational grazing. These voluntary practices are intended to minimize undesirable effects of agricultural activity on the local environment and water resources.

"These practices are the gold standard in protecting water quality, improving soil health and supporting the long-term sustainability of agriculture and forestry—Virginia's largest private industry," said Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation senior vice president of governmental relations.

Local soil and water conservation districts facilitate the program, working directly with farmers to distribute funding and provide technical assistance, administered by the

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

"With the new allocations effective July 1, we're encouraging farmers to reach out to their local SWCD and ask about eligible practices," Moore added.

The program has distributed hundreds of millions to farmers and landowners since its inception in 1984. Projects must:

- Be approved in advance by the local SWCD board.

- Meet technical specifications of the VACS program.

- Pass a field inspection, if required, prior to receiving payment.

- Be subject to spot checks throughout the project's lifespan.

"Virginia's soil and water conservation districts are ready to engage with producers, deliver technical support, and ensure that these funds translate into tangible improvements on the ground," said Kendall Tyree, executive director of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Districts. "We applaud the governor and the general assembly for their historic support of voluntary conservation initiatives and look forward to supporting Virginia's agricultural community through our district offices."

Farm Bureau leaders already are strategizing ahead of future general assembly sessions. VFBF's 2025 policies support fully funding \$319.34 million needed for FY 2027 and FY 2028 for the VACS program to help the commonwealth meet its water quality goals.

Visit dcr.virginia.gov/soil-and-water/swcds to find your local SWCD office, and dcr.virginia.gov/costshare for more information about the VACS program.



Surry Community College is offering a Vehicle Escort Operators Renewal course on Saturday, Aug. 30, at The Yadkin Center. For more information or to register, contact Dr. Douglas Underwood at (336) 386-3584 or underwoodd@surry.edu.

Vehicle escort operators renewal course set for August

Surry Community College is offering a Vehicle Escort Operators Renewal course on Saturday, Aug. 30, at The Yadkin Center from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This course is designed to meet the training requirements set by the N.C. Department of Transportation to certify oversize-overweight load escort vehicle drivers. Course components consist of de-

fensive driving, escort driver requirements, skills training, and an exam.

An additional Vehicle Escort Operators Renewal course will be offered on Saturday, November 8.

Tuition is \$71. For more information or to register, please contact Dr. Douglas Underwood, Director of Yadkin Center, at (336) 386-3584 or underwoodd@surry.edu.

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The Blue Ridge Regional Library is hiring a Library Director for the system covering Henry, Patrick, and Martinsville. Please refer to our website <http://www.brllib.va.us/careers> for more information.

Title: Deputy Commissioner

Seeking applications from qualified applicants for a full time, 40 hour per week position in the Patrick County Commissioner of the Revenue Office. Duties of the position will include but not limited to working with different computer programs, assessing personal property, business property and other duties. The candidate must possess strong math and analytical skills. Must be able to handle confidential information. Experience in accounting or bookkeeping a plus. The candidate must have good interpersonal skills and be able to communicate effectively with the public by phone and in person. Courtesy and discretion are essential attributes for the candidate. Applications are available online at www.co.patrick.va.us or may be picked up in the Commissioner of the Revenue office. All applications must be submitted to the Commissioner of the Revenue P.O. Box 367 Stuart, VA 24171 or hand delivered to Room 220 by August 8, 2025. This position will have benefits, starting salary depending on experience. 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.

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(Meeting/event information must be received no later than 5 p.m. on Friday before the desired publication date. Email to dhall@theenterprise.net.)

Meetings

Monday, Aug. 11

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, Aug. 20

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

Events

Friday, Aug. 8

The Stuart Farmers Market will be open from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Great selection of fruits, vegetables, baked items, meats, eggs, plants, craft items.

Sunday, August 10

Boyd Family Reunion, Sunday, starting at 12 p.m., Vesta Community Center on Community Lane in Vesta. Friends and family welcome. Bring a covered dish and a musical instrument if you play. For more information, call Chris Boyd, 336-344-2365 or Benny Pendleton, 540-521-5260.

Monday, Aug. 11

Fairy Stone State Park will hold a Moonshine Hollow Guided Hike at 10 a.m., the Visitor Center; Native Plants & pollinators, Shelter 4; Fairy Stone Hunt, 12 p.m., Shelter 4; Pollinator Patch Workshop, 1 p.m., Shelter 4; Magic Trees, 2 p.m., Shelter 4; Fungal Friends, 4 p.m., Shelter 4.

Tuesday, Aug. 12

Fairy Stone Park will hold a Fairy Stone Hunt at 12 p.m., Shelter 4; Turtle Time, 2 p.m., Visitor Center.

Wednesday, Aug. 13

The Patrick Community Food Bank will hold its distribution from 8:30-11 a.m. and from 5:30-8 p.m. at the Stuart site, from 8-10 a.m. at Fellowship Church in Ararat, and starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Community Building in Meadows of Dan.

Fairy Stone Park will hold a Little Mountain Falls Hike, 9 a.m., Amphitheatre Trailhead, Fairy Stone Hunt, 12 p.m., Shelter 4; Mysteries of the Whitetail Deer, 2 p.m., Beach Breezeway, Blobs in your Backyard, 3 p.m., Beach Breezeway.

The Carroll County Genealogy Club will meet at 2 p.m. The club is located next to the Historical Society and Museum on Main Street in Hillsville.

Thursday, Aug. 14

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. Pizza, tossed salad, and beverages will be provided, Bring desserts to share with the group.

Fairy Stone Park, Oak Hickory Trail Guided Hike, 9 a.m., Shelter 4; Living with Black Bears, 3 p.m.,

Shelter 4.

Friday, Aug. 15

The community food truck will be at the Fairystone VFD from 3-4 p.m.

Stuart Farmers Market will be open from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Great selection of fruits, vegetables, baked items, meats, eggs, plants, craft items. Blood Pressure Checks by Blue Ridge Nursing & Landmark Center.

Fairy Stone Park: Little Mountain Falls Hike, 9 a.m., Shelter 4; Woodland Wellness, 10 a.m., Shelter 4; Fairy Stone Hunt, 1 p.m., Shelter 4; Turtle Time, 2 p.m., Visitor Center; Goblintown Iron Mine Walk, 4 p.m.; Visitor Center; Welcome Campfire, 8 p.m., Amphitheater.

Saturday, Aug. 16

9th Annual Bike Ride, Car Show/Cruise In & Fish Fry at Mt. Nebo Holiness Church, 30598 JEB Stuart Hwy, Spencer. Sign in begins at 9 a.m. and the ride will start at 10 a.m. There is no fee to ride. The fish fry starts at 8 a.m. and the car show starts at 9 a.m. with no fee to enter. For more information, call Angie Penn (276) 732-6014. For ride information, call David Hylton (276) 692-5878.

Fairy Stone Park: Whiskey Run Hike, 9 a.m., Stuart's Knob Trailhead; Turtle Time, 11 a.m., Visitor Center; Fairy Stone Hunt, 12 p.m., Shelter 4; Moonshine Murders, 1 p.m., Shelter 4; Friends of Fairy Stone meeting, 2 p.m., Shelter 3; Fayerdale: the Missing Town, 3 p.m., Shelter 4; C.S.I: Creek Scene Investigation, 4 p.m., Shelter 4.

Sunday, Aug. 17

Fairy Stone Park: Moonshine Hollow Hike, 10 a.m., Visitor Center; Native Plants & Pollinators, 11 a.m., Shelter 4; Fairy Stone Hunt, 12 p.m., Shelter 4; Turtle Time, 1 p.m., Visitor Center; Magic Trees, 2 p.m., Shelter 4; Fungal Friends, 4 p.m., Shelter 4.

Friday, Aug. 22

Stuart Farmers Market is open from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Great selection of fruits, vegetables, baked items, meats, eggs, plants, craft items. Stuart Rotary on site with Ag Fair Exhibit Info.

Friday, Aug. 29

Stuart Farmers Market, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Great selection of fruits, vegetables, baked items, meats, eggs, plants, craft items. Information provided by the Patrick County Master Gardeners & Stuart Rotary on site with Ag Fair Exhibit Info.

Friday, Aug. 29-Monday, Sept. 1

Stuart Church of Living Water (formerly Stuart UMC) will hold its 18th annual Labor Day Flea Market featuring 125 - large 25'x30' vendor spaces. Vendors may set up on Thursday, August 28 for free. Four fun-filled shopping days beginning Friday through Monday. Buy, sell, trade. Worship service on site, Sunday morning at 8 a.m. with Pastor Tommy Shepherd. From Stuart, follow Rte. 58 East (JEB Stuart Highway) 8.7 miles to 25767. Convenient visitor parking for only \$1 per vehicle. All proceeds support the church's mission and outreach ministries. For more information and space reservations, call Alex at 276-229-8488 or the church at 276-694-3322. No alcoholic beverages allowed.

Saturday, Aug. 30

Live Bluegrass Music at Fairy Stone State Park, Saturday, August 30, 7 p.m., Shelter 2. Discover the roots and evolution of bluegrass as the Kitchen Pick-

ers perform live.

Fairy Stone State Park presents: For Goodness "Snakes" (and turtles too), 2 p.m., Shelter 2.

The Patrick County Food Bank will hold a memorial service in memory of Dudley Clark at the Rotary Building from 3-5 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 4

The Patrick County Agricultural Fair exhibit coordinators will be accepting quilt entries from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Memorial Building at Rotary Field in Stuart.

Saturday, Sept. 6 - Sunday, Sept. 7

The Patrick County Agricultural Fair exhibit coordinators will be accepting fair entries (except quilts) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Hooker Building at Rotary Field in Stuart.

Sunday, Sept. 21 - Wednesday, Sept. 24

Middle Cross Missionary Church will hold a Fall Revival with Sammy Frye at 7 p.m. Music by Patrick County High School Praise and Worship, Too Young Too Old, and The Bishops.

Ongoing

Monday Market at Fairy Stone State Park, rain or shine, 5-7 p.m. at Shelters #3 & #4. Cash only market. Free parking. Runs through Labor Day.

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

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

Inside yard sale to benefit Patrick County Alzheimer's Group LLC. Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Members meet on the first Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Alzheimer's office. New members are welcome. For more information, call (276) 693-6018.

Vesta Alzheimer's Group LLC meets at the Vesta Community Center on the third Tuesday each month at noon. Both groups welcome new members and invite caregivers to attend. Literature is also available.

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

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

Free Community Meal, on the 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.

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. 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.

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Patrick County Retired Teachers' Book Club, Row 1, l to r: Deborah Foster, Carol Mullins, Ellen Elgin, Betty Perry, Phyllis Eastridge. Row 2, l to r: Sue Bleckley, Michele told Arnder, Anita Knight, Carol Russo, Barbara Pendleton, Suzanne Hutchins, Janet Moore, Joanne Hill, Carol Rupprecht. (Contributed)

PCRTA organizes book club

One of the projects of the Patrick County Retired Teachers Association is the organization of a book club that meets monthly in the local library. Anyone in the community who enjoys reading and sharing is invited to attend. Attendance is growing and interest in books has increased.

September is the organizational meeting. Members choose books to discuss, one per month for the following

year. The book club offers more than reading. Local and regional authors and librarians have been guests and have discussed their novels and their decision to work as librarians. It is a time for socializing, as well. Discussions touch on culture, world and local history, ancestry, biographies, genres of literature in different time periods, and life in general, often the lives of the members

themselves and their backgrounds. Book discussions are stepping stones for interesting conversations and further book choices.

Some of the books shared are The Measure, Things We Cannot Say, Frozen River, Christmas Box, Homeward, West with Giraffes, The Muralist, Secret Lives of Booksellers and Librarians, The Color of Water, and The Orphan Collector. All are welcome.

Blue Ridge Heritage to host program on Monarch Waystations

Blue Ridge Heritage will host "Monarch Waystations – Butterfly Havens" on Saturday, Aug. 16, from 10:30 a.m. to noon at Peterman Library in Floyd. The free program is presented in partnership with the Southwest Piedmont Master Naturalists and the Dan River Basin Association.

Monarch butterflies, which are native and endangered, migrate through Virginia each year. The program will focus on monarch traits and the specific types of waystations they seek along their journey. Attendees will also learn how to design their own monarch waystation to help support the species.

The session will be led by Regina Flora, MS, VMN, assistant educator with the Dan River Basin Association. A graduate of Old Dominion University, Flora holds a Master of Science in Occupational and Technical Studies with a concentration in education. After retiring from the business world, she became a certified Virginia Master Naturalist and now serves as the educational outreach chair for the Southwestern Piedmont Master Naturalist chapter. She is also a Project Learning Tree facilitator, an avid bird-watcher, and a global nature enthusiast.

Light refreshments will be served, and all are welcome to attend.

Blue Ridge Heritage is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to promoting economic development through place-based programs centered on the natural and cultural heritage of Virginia's Blue Ridge region, especially in Floyd and Patrick counties. Its educational outreach spans the region's historical evolution from 19th-century rural life to 20th-century globalization.

"That's how you get a kid who is not speaking English, or who is dyslexic, or who's struggling, to end up being an engineer, a scientist, a doctor, a tradesman. If a kid can just wrestle with complex texts a little bit, they're probably ready for higher education."

Citing ACT testing data, Weaver said a reading score of 21 indicates a student is "college-entry ready."

"This is what the ACT says: We've seen kids flunk out, we've seen kids graduate. This is the thing right here. If they can do this, they're probably going to make it. If they can't, they're probably not going to make it," he said.

Weaver also emphasized the urgency of applying best practices in reading instruction, regardless of debates over educational theory.

"Kids can't afford for us to get our 'why' together," he said. "Some things we just have to do because it is our duty. Because that's the way the trend is moving, because this is the season, this is the cycle of justice that we're on."

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Andrea Cassell said staff are ready and excited for the new school year.

"Our educators are excited, everybody's ready," she said. "I think we've got our transportation routes set. We've had a few changes, but all of our kids are still getting free breakfast and lunch this year."

Cassell said the decision to start school on a Friday was based on feedback from a staff survey.

"We built multiple calendars and looked at holidays and breaks throughout the year. Starting on a Friday allows us to have a three-day break at Thanksgiving, just based on the way the dates fell," she said. "Our staff voted, and that was the majority choice."

She said Friday will be used for students to learn rules and procedures, with instruction beginning in full on Monday.

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ABC NOTICE

Siya Jyoti LLC trading as Ararat Go Mart, 5348 Ararat Highway, Ararat, Patrick County, Virginia 24053-3920.

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Convenience Grocery Store, Wine and Beer Consumed Off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

Nikita Patel, Managing Member
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or (800) 552-3200.

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ABC NOTICE

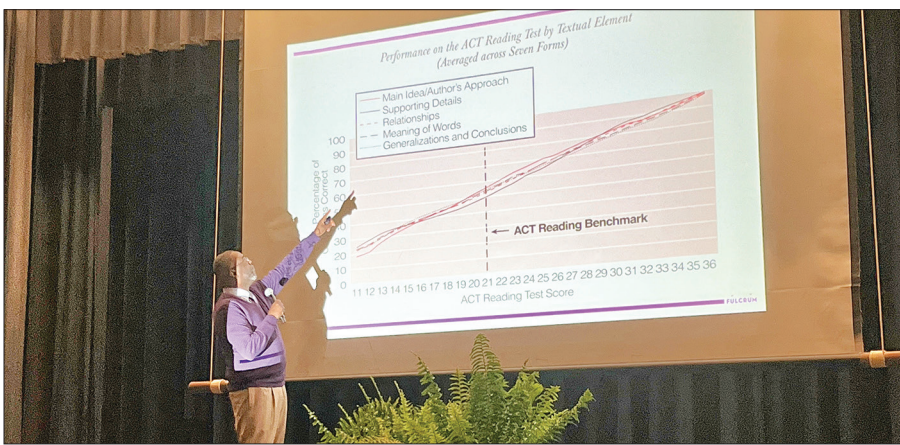
Dyani 142 Corp trading as Robert's Market and Grill, 3918 Fairystone Park Hwy, Stuart, Virginia.

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for an Off Premises Beer & Wine license.

Kamlesh Brahmabhatt, Director (Owner)
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or (800) 552-3200.

Teachers

(cont. from page 1)



Kareem Weaver addressed an audience of Patrick County teachers and staff during a work day on Monday, as part of preparation for the upcoming school year, which gets underway on Friday, Aug. 8.



Teachers and staff attended an instructional event on Monday.

LEGAL

Meeting Notice

Patrick County Public Service Authority Organizational Meeting

The Patrick County Public Service Authority Board of Directors will hold its Annual Organizational Meeting on Tuesday, August 19, 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.

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TRUSTEE'S SALE OF

568 Laurel Ridge Estate Road, Meadows of Dan, VA 24120
In execution of a Deed of Trust in the original principal amount of \$193,325.00 dated October 17, 2022 recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court for Patrick County on October 21, 2022 as Instrument Number: 220001897, the undersigned appointed Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction, at the Main entrance of the courthouse for the Circuit Court of Patrick County, 101 W Blue Ridge St, Stuart, VA 24171 on September 29, 2025 at 2:00 PM the property described in said deed of trust, located at the above address and briefly described as: All that certain tract or parcel of land with all improvements thereon and appurtenances and rights of way thereunto belonging, and being in the Blue Ridge Magisterial District of Floyd County, Virginia, being Lot 13, containing 4.9142 acres, as shown on that certain plat of survey prepared by Larry G. Rakes, CLS, dated October 29, 1984, and recorded in Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Patrick County, Virginia, in Plat Cabinet 1, Slide 15-C; and Together with that right to use the roadways shown the aforesaid plat of survey, for ingress and egress to State Route #601, as set forth in Deed dated November 19, 1984, recorded in the aforesaid Clerk's Office in Deed Book 240, Page 592. Tax ID: 4414.00.111.
TERMS OF SALE: A bidder's deposit of \$10,000.00 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower, will be required in the form of a certified or cashier's check. Cash will not be accepted as a deposit. Settlement within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Trustee may forfeit deposit. Additional terms to be announced at sale. This is a communication from a debt collector. This notice is an attempt to collect on a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. (Trustee # 25-008945)
Substitute Trustee: ALG Trustee, LLC C/O Orlans Law Group PLLC PO Box 2548, Leesburg, VA 20177 (703) 777-7101 website: www.Orlans.com The Vendor Covius Holding Services will be used in conjunction with this sale.

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Thank you for reading
The Enterprise

AUGUST PATRICK COUNTY BRANCH LIBRARY 2025					
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2
Interested or have questions about our programs? Call us at 276-694-3352. *Registration required.				Sit & Stitch 11:00	
	4	5	6	7	8
Yoga 10:00*	Walking Club at the Rail Trail 9:00	Walking Club 9:00	Silent Book Club 5:30-7:00	Board Game Day 10:00-12:00	
LEGO Club 4:00	Yoga 5:15*	Yoga 1:15*			
	11	12	13	14	15
Yoga 10:00*	Walking Club at the Rail Trail 9:00	Walking Club 9:00	Not Your Mother's Book Club 5:00	Sit & Stitch 11:00	
LEGO Club 4:00	Yoga 5:15*	Book Bingo 10:30	Yoga 1:15*		
	18	19	20	21	22
Yoga 10:00*	Walking Club at the Rail Trail 9:00	Walking Club 9:00	Library Board Meeting 12:00	Open Art Studio 1:00	Senior Social 11:00
LEGO Club 4:00	Yoga 5:15*	Meet Pepper Basham 4:00-6:00			
	25	26	27	28	29
Yoga 10:00*	Walking Club at the Rail Trail 9:00	Walking Club 9:00			
Tumbled Sea Treasure 1:00*	Yoga 5:15*	Yoga 1:15*			The Joy of Watercolor Painting with Cindy Howe 11:00
LEGO Club 4:00					



Laura Simmons of One Family Productions (OFF) presents a Grassroots Grant check to Annabelle Sechist, president of the Friends group. Also pictured are Sarah Wray of OFF, Olivia Booth, Marcia Booth, Norma Bozenmayer and Madeline Saxton, both of the Friends group. Representing the park is Assistant Park Manager Ethan Seaver and Volunteer Coordinator Jess.

One nonprofit helps another in support of Fairy Stone State Park

One Family Productions awarded a \$1,000 Grassroots Grant to Friends of Fairy Stone State Park, a newly formed non-profit that supports Fairy Stone State Park. The grant will be used for the purchase of materials to assemble pet waste stations at 4 trailheads in the park. This is a wonderful example of one nonprofit supporting another in Patrick County.

Your dog can become a Bark Ranger at the next Bark in the Park event, slated to be held this fall. Watch the Friends' Facebook page for details.

New invasive insect detected in Virginia

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) announces the detection of a new invasive insect pest in Virginia. Agency inspectors discovered the box tree moth, *Cydalima perspectalis*, at four sites in Clarke and Loudoun counties.

Box tree moth is an invasive insect pest that can significantly damage and potentially kill boxwood (*Buxus* species) plants if left unchecked. The caterpillars are ravenous feeders, and heavy infestations can completely defoliate host plants. VDACS will provide treatment for boxwood plants, if box tree moth is confirmed on boxwood plants.

The box tree moth is native to East Asia and has become a pest in Europe where boxwood is native. In 2021, The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) detected box tree moth in New York. As of July 2025, it has been confirmed in Delaware, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virgin-

ia. Prior to the detections in Clarke and Loudoun Counties, box tree moth was not known to occur in Virginia.

Early detection and rapid response are vital for the management of any newly introduced invasive pest. VDACS has surveyed the area surrounding the detections to determine the extent of infestation and has planned for more surveys to occur in the future. VDACS encourages property owners to report any suspected damage to boxwood plants on their property by using VDACS' Invasive Species Reporting Tool.

For resources on how to identify BTM damage or life stages, please visit www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/ENTO/ENTO-445/ENTO-445.pdf.

For more information on box tree moth, please visit the USDA APHIS website at www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/box-tree-moth, the VDACS website at www.vdacs.virginia.gov/plant-industry-services.shtml, or contact the VDACS Office of Plant Industry Services at 804.786.3515.

Black Bears

(cont. from page 1)



About a dozen people attended the Living with Black Bears program hosted by Blue Ridge Heritage.

seek habitats with a steady food supply—especially mast-producing trees like acorns—as well as good escape cover and den sites for females with cubs.

Although bears prefer forested or rural areas, she said they're increasingly found in cities due to human-generated food waste.

"More fast-food restaurants, and they can smell that wafting through the area. More dumpsters, more people's houses that have garbage, more people throwing out garbage, garbage on the highways, and around in the parking lots and things," she said. "So it shouldn't be surprising to find out that cities like Roanoke, Martinsville, and Danville have bears right there in the city limits. The more people we have, the more garbage we have."

Flora emphasized that most human-bear conflicts are created by humans themselves.

"Any conflict—we're doing that ourselves. And if you're complaining about it or having a bad conflict, then you first have to stop and see, what am I doing? Or what's happening at the neighbor's house?" she said.

While some residents may follow all the right steps, they still might encounter bears if their property lies along a

bear's travel path.

"Because they travel the little path, like most animals do, just about every night around to the same area," she said.

Feeding bears—intentionally or not—is illegal in Virginia.

"The law covers anything that you put out, like animal food or your corn fields. You put it out there, you were actually feeding the bears," Flora said. "You can actually be fined by the DWR for feeding bears, regardless of whether it's intentional or not."

To avoid attracting bears, Flora recommended securing or removing food sources such as garbage, pet food, table scraps, or uncleaned grills. Compost piles can also draw bears due to the strong odors.

"While we like for people to compost, you might get to a point where you're noticing that's why the bear's coming in—he's smelling all of that," she said. "The best thing to do about it is to reduce the odor because you are supposed to put grass clippings and dead leaves or something in it every so often."

Flora also advised removing bird feeders between April and November and using electric fencing to protect beehives.

Take Back Your County



The Board of Supervisors have forgotten that they are just a mouthpiece for the citizens here. They need to learn to listen again!

Malcolm Roach

Patrick County Board of Supervisor Smith River District



VOTE FOR

paid for and authorized by Malcolm Roach

