



THE ENTERPRISE

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

Lacks recognized for service with inaugural award



The Patrick County Board of Supervisors presented Judy Lacks with a proclamation and recognized her as the first Patrick County Partner recipient for her work in the community. From left, Chairman Jonathan Wood, Lacks, Vice Chairman Andrew Overby, and board members Doug Perry, Steve Marshall, and Clayton Kendrick.

By Taylor Boyd

The Patrick County Board of Supervisors approved a proclamation and presented its first-ever Patrick County Partner Award to Judy Lacks at its final meeting of the year.

Lacks, a former school superintendent who later assists the county's Parks and Recreation Department, now serves as chairman, treasurer, and planning committee member of the Patrick County Senior Citizens group.

County Administrator Michael McGuinness created the new award program to honor unsung heroes—those who work without formal recognition to make the county a better place to live, work, and play.

Also at the December board meeting, McGuinness, who had been named the interim county administrator, was unanimously confirmed to the position.

Following the meeting, McGuinness said he

was honored and energized by the board's decision.

"It's an honor. I am fired up. I feel like I could go back to the office at 2 a.m. and start working," McGuinness said.

"When the employees say, 'Hey, I haven't been this motivated,' or 'I feel validated,' that's why you work 70 hours a week — because you care," he said. "I've said it before, and I'm assuming it's going to get old, but it's an honor" to serve in the post.

McGuinness said the decision was unexpected.

"Did I think it could come true? Sure," he said. "Do I think — and you'd have to ask the supervisors — that they may have seen some positive changes already in 30 days? I hope. I hate to keep saying it, but we're winning. Patrick County is winning."

In other business, the board:

- Heard from Ed Anthony on the need for the board to consider the Planning Commission's recommendations regarding limits on solar energy in the county.

- Approved releasing the remaining funds allocated to the Patrick County Food Bank for fiscal year 2026.

- Approved a \$30,000 donation to the Patrick County Food Bank using American Rescue Plan Act funds.

- Approved reallocating \$16,000 originally earmarked for the Business Development Center to the Food Bank.

- Appointed a budget committee for the up-

(See Lacks p. 12)

Meadows of Dan Elementary School recognized as Region VI Leader in Reading Growth

Reading growth data recently published confirms that Meadows of Dan Elementary School ranks #1 in Region VI for growth in reading, a significant achievement that reflects the collective commitment of students, families, faculty, and support staff.

This outstanding accomplishment is a testament to the dedication, collaboration, and shared belief in student success that define the Meadows of Dan Elementary School community. Every role—students, families, teachers, assistants, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, custodians, and support personnel—contributes to the culture of growth and excellence evident in these results.

In addition to leading Region VI in reading growth, Meadows of Dan Elementary School has earned multiple distinctions:

* One of the Top 5 Schools in Region VI

* #1 in Region VI for Reading Growth

- * #2 in Region VI for Math Growth
- * #2 in Region VI for Readiness – Chronic Absenteeism
- * Recognized as Distinguished in Performance Level (VDOE Performance & Support Framework Ranking: 97.1)

These recognitions underscore the school's continued focus on academic growth, student readiness, and strong attendance practices.

"This achievement truly highlights the strength of our entire school community and the unwavering support of the Meadows of Dan community," Mrs. Rozina Turner, Principal, shared. "Together, we are making a meaningful difference for our students every single day."

Meadows of Dan Elementary School proudly celebrates this success and remains committed to fostering growth, engagement, and excellence for all learners.



Ed Anthony (at podium) discusses the Dogwood Road closure, as Patrick County Administrator Michael McGuinness (seated) listens intently.

Anthony questions legality of Dogwood Road closure

By Taylor Boyd

Mayo River District resident Ed Anthony believes the September 8 vote by the Patrick County Board of Supervisors to close a portion of Dogwood Road between Hardin Reynolds Memorial School (HRMS) and its gymnasium is null and void.

At the December 15 Board of Supervisors meeting, Anthony said the law requires that all items to be voted on must be published in at least two local newspapers for a period of two weeks

(See Anthony p. 8)

Winners of Creative Writing Contest announced

Congratulations to the winners of the annual Creative Writing Contest sponsored by The Enterprise.

The overall winner is Paisley Shuff, a ninth-grade student at Patrick County High School.

The first-place winner in the fourth through seventh grade division is Irie Snow, school not listed.

Meredith Pilson is the first-place winner in the kindergarten through third-grade division. Meredith attends Woolwine Elementary School.

Parents: to claim your child's prize, email Kathy Hunter, kathyhunter@mountainmedianews.com, or call (304) 647-5724.

We appreciate all of the submissions and the time contributed by local school staff. The participating local schools and corresponding ab-

(See Winners p. 3)



Santa's reindeer cleared for Christmas Eve travel in Virginia

Santa Claus shakes hands with Dr. Charlie Broaddus, Virginia state veterinarian, after Santa's nine reindeer received a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection allowing them to enter Virginia on Christmas Eve.

Each year, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) state veterinarian has the responsibility of regulating

the movement of animals into the state, while the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is charged with the management of the state's wildlife. The importation and possession of any member of the deer family is prohibited in Virginia without a DWR permit to ensure animal health and protect the Commonwealth's wildlife and agriculture.

DMV Select to close for holidays

The DMV Select office in Stuart will be closed Wednesday, December 24, through Friday, December 26 in observance of the Christmas Holiday.

The office will also be closed on Thursday, January 1.



Keep the holidays festive, fun and safe

With holiday gatherings and festivities in full swing, experts are urging caution to keep celebrations safe for everyone.

Garlands, Christmas trees and twinkling lights are hallmarks of the season. But for all the cheer they bring, it's important to decorate responsibly. The National Fire Protection Association reports that U.S. fire departments respond to around 835 home fires per year that begin with holiday decorations.

Safety experts advise using nonflammable decorations when decking the halls, and keeping lit candles well away from anything that can burn.

Before stringing lights, ensure they're in good working order. Replace strands with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections and follow manufacturer guidelines for indoor or outdoor use. Use clips instead of nails to hang lights to avoid damaging wires.

"Be careful with lighting," cautioned Kim Price, Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. farm field underwriting manager. "Don't overload circuits, check light strands for frayed areas, and always turn them off when you're away and at night when you're asleep."

The centerpiece of holiday décor also deserves special attention. Between 2018 and 2022, fire departments responded to an annual average of 155 home fires caused by Christmas trees. While uncommon, these fires can

Chamber Chat



By **Rebecca Adcock**

The holiday and end of year events are upon us. So much has been happening that I forgot to write a "Chamber Chat" for November. So, here is a combined article.

We blinked and November passed us by, but not before we were able to do some events for the Chamber. During the first half of the month, we held our annual Community Leaders Forum. This year's featured speakers included the Virginia Department of Transportation, Patrick County EDA & Tourism, Town of Stuart and Triton Inc., the contractor for the Highway 58 Vesta section. Thank you to everyone who attended and to our speakers. Lots of exciting projects will be happening in Patrick County in 2026. We also assisted Reynolds Homestead with our Leadership Patrick County cohort as they visited businesses in the Woolwine area. Meetings throughout the month helped us catch up with the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, Patrick County magazine, Downtown Revitalization Project, dam removals along the Mayo River and projects along the Mayo River Rail Trail.

December is always a whirlwind, and this year was even more so with the winter weather that helped to usher in our Hometown Christmas weekend. Having a beautiful blanket of white snow draping the tree as we participated in the Grand Illumination made the event even more magical. The snow held on as all of our Saturday

grow fast and become serious.

"Keep those live Christmas trees watered and away from vents," Price advised.

According to NFPA, 35% of tree fires occur in January when Christmas trees become more flammable as they dry out. Trees should be kept well hydrated by adding water daily. They should be placed at least 3 feet from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights, and don't block any exits or doorways. Properly dispose of the tree after Christmas or when it's dry.

Safety also extends to preparing a holiday feast. NFPA reports that Christmas Day and Christmas Eve rank second and third for home cooking fires, with nearly double the

day events were successfully attended leading up to the annual Patrick County Christmas Parade. The holiday happenings have not stopped and will continue through the New Year, with special dinners, parties and first day hikes. We were also busy in December delivering some extra special gifts through our Secret Santa program. One of the best perks of being with the Chamber is helping to distribute funds to some of our hard working, much deserved citizens of Patrick County. We are thankful and appreciative to our sponsor of this program.

Another year has come to a close. It has been a whirlwind for sure. We have hosted some great programs from our Community Leaders Forum, educational classes with P&HCC, to promote all the great events that are happening in our county. We were fortunate to host the Federal Reserve for a first ever county visit back in August. And, we are continuing to work on enhancements for our beloved Mayo River Rail Trail. While we have had some setbacks, the Chamber of Commerce continues to be committed to working with our local town and county in cultivating a diverse and healthy economy for our residents and visitors.

As we look forward into 2026, The Chamber is continuing to work on educational offerings for our community, the Patrick County magazine, Dolly Parton Imagination Library, as well as working on some new and exciting initiatives for our county. We could not do it without your support. Our 2026 Chamber Membership will be rolling out the first of the year. To those businesses, individuals, and organizations that are current members, Thank you! To those who have been members in the past or have never joined, I hope you will consider joining. Our Chamber plays a vital role in helping to assist the town and county, as well as assisting our local non-profits with information and resources. We are always happy to talk to anyone who is interested in learning more.

On behalf of the Chamber board and staff, we hope everyone is able to enjoy the holiday season with friends and family. And, here's to a prosperous and healthful 2026!

(Adcock is the director of the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce)

daily average.

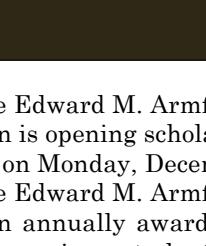
Unattended cooking is the leading cause of kitchen fires and fire deaths, so always remain in the kitchen while using the stovetop, and check on food frequently.

Items that can catch fire, like oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging and towels, should be kept well away from the stovetop. And always keep children a safe distance from hot surfaces, liquids, electrical cords, matches and lighters.

Read more on entertaining safely this season, and what to do in the event of a fire.

And if you're venturing out to run errands or visit family this season, follow travel safety tips.

Armfield Scholarship application opens earlier



THE
EDWARD M. ARMFIELD, SR.
FOUNDATION

The Edward M. Armfield, Sr. Foundation is opening scholarship applications on Monday, December 15.

The Edward M. Armfield, Sr. Foundation annually awards scholarships to deserving students graduating from each of the five traditional Surry County high schools, Surry Early College High School, and Millennium Charter Academy who will be attending four-year colleges and universities or Surry Community College.

Scholarships are also available for Surry Community College students who are graduating with an associate degree and continuing toward their bachelor's degree. Scholarship awards vary, and are renewable, provided the student maintains a 3.0 GPA.

Applicants must be May 2026 graduates who plan to enter an accredited four-year educational institution or Surry Community College in the fall of 2026 as a full-time student.

Surry Community College May 2026 graduates must have previously graduated from a public high school in Surry County and plan to enter an accredited four-year college/university in the fall of 2026 to complete their bachelor's degree as a full-time student.

To be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must complete the following:

- Complete all sections of the online application.

- Submit a FAFSA form, print or

save an electronic copy of the student's SAI (Student Aid Index), and upload it.

- Upload a 300-word short answer responding to the following prompt: "Why should you be selected for an Armfield Foundation Scholarship?"

- Submit the email address of the student's school counselor, in order for the counselor to upload the student's academic credentials for the transcript portion of the application.

- Complete electronic signatures for both the student and their parent/guardian.

The Edward M. Armfield, Sr. Foundation has awarded \$2.3 million in scholarships to deserving students graduating from the public high schools in Surry County since 2005. Scholarships range in value from \$1,000 per year for Surry Community College attendees up to \$12,500

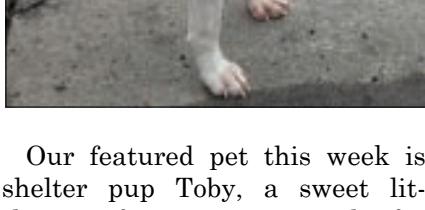
per year for students attending higher-cost private colleges and universities. Scholarships are renewable for one additional year for Surry Community College students or students transferring from Surry Community College to a four-year institution, and for three additional years for students attending four-year schools immediately out of high school.

To be considered for The Armfield Foundation scholarship, students must complete an online application by Friday, February 27, 2026, at noon. To apply, visit armfieldscholars.communityforce.com.

Photo Caption:

The Edward M. Armfield, Sr. Foundation is opening scholarship applications on Monday, Dec. 15. Students can apply at armfieldscholars.communityforce.com. The deadline is February 27, 2026, at noon.

==== Pets of the Week ====



Our featured pet this week is shelter pup Toby, a sweet little mix of pure joy in search of a Christmas miracle.

Toby is about 8 months old, and super playful. He was well behaved with all the other dogs, and excited for his chance to be in the Christmas parade.

This little boy has been in the shelter way too long and his life depends on finding a loving home.

Toby weighs about 40 pounds. He is neutered and vaccinated. Toby needs a Christmas miracle. (276) 694-6259

THE SHELTER IS FULL - PLEASE SAVE A LIFE!

ADOPT!! These are fantastic pets! All dogs and cats deserve a permanent loving home. 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 vaccinations.

The Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League provides pet food and spay/neuter assistance. Contact blueridgeaw@gmail.com for details. Visit the Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League website at [www.blueridgeaw.org](http://blueridgeaw.org) and our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/blueridgeaw/>

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1500 Kings Mtn Rd.
Martinsville, VA,
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Winners

(cont. from page 1)

abbreviations are:

Blue Ridge Elementary School (BRES)
Meadows of Dan Elementary School (MODE)
Woolwine Elementary School (WES)
Patrick County High School (PCHS)
Entries receiving honorable mention are published inside and in the B-section of this week's newspaper.

Eighth - Twelfth

Savior in a Stable

By Paisley Shuff

Patrick County High School

In theory, time travel sounds like fun.

Just imagine: you go to the future, see new inventions, and brag all about it when you get back to the present.

However, it's not quite as fun when you time travel to a rusty stable with a scratchy outfit instead of your go-to sweatpants, the fetid stench of barn animals at your back.

"No offense," I tell the horse standing behind me.

"Esther!" A woman calls. "What are you doing? We have more guests to attend to!"

I stick my head out the barn to find a woman, maybe in her forties, marching to a dimly lit building not far in the distance. Curiously, I follow her to-

"An inn?" I mumble.

The woman enters the inn, and, with slight hesitation, I do as well. There's a set of stairs off to one side, as well as a gazillion doors for a gazillion different rooms. Honestly, it doesn't look too different from a modern-day hotel.

"Take the guests to their rooms, Esther," the brunette woman instructs me. I'm going to call her Mrs. Innkeeper. "Make sure they are all settled in comfortably."

"Alright," I smile.

I'm still not sure why I'm in this specific day at this specific time, but I guess I'll find out soon enough.

A myriad of guests arrive at the inn, and, after carefully doing my best at a job I've never done before, I march back down the stairs to report to Mrs. Innkeeper that all the rooms are full.

"That is going to be a problem," Mrs. Innkeeper mutters. She motions somewhere behind her, and I look at where she's pointing.

An older man, presumably Mr. Innkeeper, is talking with a young couple.

"It's okay, Joseph," the young woman says.

"No, it's not, Mary," Joseph argues. "You can't go any further! You've been in pain for the last hour- and don't even try to say otherwise!" He mumbles something about a senseless census.

Mary, who can't be but a young teenager, nods her head. "I'm afraid he's right," she tells Mr. Innkeeper. "I've been having contractions for a while now."

Suddenly, I realize that Mary is with child.

"Oh," I whisper, "that's why I time traveled here."

Everybody looks at me.

"Sorry," I say sheepishly. "I was just thinking about how there is one last option..."

"What is it?" Mary and Joseph plead.

"There's the stable," I offer, "it's kind of smelly, but it's warm."

"It's a shelter," Joseph decides. He looks to the innkeeper. "Can we stay in your stable?"

Mr. Innkeeper nods and looks at me. "Esther, go set up two beds..." He pauses, looking at the couple. "...and maybe a third."

Setting up the beds takes all of two seconds. I try to stuff as much hay as I can underneath the measly mats, and they end up looking frumpy. Hezekiah, a stable hand, is sent into the barn to help me set up the third bed: a baby bed.

After taking it outside to wash it out, Hezekiah returns with a manger, traditionally used to feed animals from.

"It's not perfect," Hezekiah admits. He runs a worried hand through his dark hair.

"It's better than nothing," I promise him. "And something tells me it'll work out just fine."

Mary and Joseph enter the stable soon after, and I wander around the fields outside the inn, uncertain how much longer I'll be here before I time travel back to the present.

A pained scream from the stable answers my question.

Mr. Innkeeper's wife rushes into the stable mere seconds after I do, and we find a tear-streaked Mary and a nervous yet reassuring Joseph. He doesn't complain as Mary squeezes his hand, barn animals braying in the background.

"Esther, go grab a cold towel," Mrs. Innkeeper tells me, her voice steady. I do as she says and return, placing the towel carefully on Mary's forehead.

My heart beats faster every second when I realize something incredible:

I am witnessing the birth of the Savior.

Despite the tiredness in Mary's eyes, Mary insists that she holds the baby.

"What's his name?" I ask as she cradles Him gently, even though I know the answer.

"His name is Jesus," Mary responds. She and Joseph share a knowing glance.

Just then, a few shepherds burst into the stable and fall to their knees.

"It's the Messiah!" one of them cries. "He's here! Emmanuel!"

The young couple smiles at the shepherds when, suddenly, Mrs. Innkeeper recoils.

"Out with you!" she shouts. "Take your insane mouths with you!"

"There's nothing insane about what they're saying," Joseph informs her.

Mrs. Innkeeper stiffens. "Esther, do you believe any of this?"

"All of it," I tell her, "all of it."

All of a sudden, the room darkens, and I'm lying down on a comfortable mattress, definitely invented in the later A.D. years. Oh- and I finally have my go-to sweatpants on.

I look beyond the ceiling.

"Humble beginnings." Then I shake my head, smiling. "You could've been born anywhere. You could've even made sure there was an empty room at the inn."

Sunlight slowly begins to stream into my room. I know it won't be long until my younger siblings start turning on all the lights and yelling, "Merry Christmas!"

I grin as I throw back my covers.

"The Savior of the world- humbly born in a stable."

Fourth - Seventh

First Place

The Girl Like Me

By Irie Snow

Seventh Grade

Our story starts at a cabin in a forest named Rivka. The forest is named after the mother of three stunning daughters named: Lavinia, (the oldest at 17) Georgina, (the middle at 15) and Wilhelmina, (the youngest at 14).

When the sister's where about 15, 14, and 13, they lost their mother over night to hypothermia the same thing that their father died from when they weren't even 8 years old, as you might think it was a terrible tragedy but the girls tried to make it through.

It was hard for Lavinia especially, she was never quite the same, after their first winter after his death, she has always bin strange or, maybe off from the rest of her sister's, that's what her mothers mother said before she died that awful summer night.

On this important day Lavinia was turning 18 but she did not tell, or remind her two other sisters because since father passed, she never really had a good birthday, she was always wishing on shooting stars that something might change and of that might be sooner that later, and today she felt as if God had herd her request.

She awoke early, at sun rise, did her chores quietly trying hard to not wake the rest, she packed a bag full of things she believed God told her to bring, like, extra lunch food, white cloth, oil, and her comb, she put it in the only thing that she was ever given on her birthday it was her velvet backpack that was the color of a roes pink and sunflower yellow her favorite colors, then simply wrote a note that said, I will be gone for as long as the day, the till the super bell rings. < Lavinia

As she left she walked through her forest named Rivka. She approached the field witch was about a mile from her cabin and in the field to her astonishment was a horse speckled like the picture her grandmother made and told her that royals own, her grandmothers best friend owns those horses Lavinia's mother always hushed her grandmother saying, If that that was true, might as well have Lavinia marry royalty! That will never happen muma! < Mother

As she walked closer to the speckled horse, and saw a man about 19 or 20 years of age sitting their, he seemed to be waiting for something, or if she was lucky waiting for her. She was arm length away from him, he turned around in and looked her right in her eyes she examined him slowly Lavinia described him in her mind like this: he is taller than me, he has blue eyes like the ocean in the books I read his smile seemed to fit his smooth handsome face, he had blonde hair that looked golden in the sun light, she thought in her head

"Lavinia?" He asked wakening her back to reality.

Feeling as if she had just woke up confusingly said, "Yes sir, or, no, Wait what is your name?"

"my name is Pr....Maximus," Maximus answered hesitantly.

"Hello Pr....Maximus," Mocked Lavinia playfully.

"No its just Maximus" He corrected quickly.

"So Maximus, what is your will here?"

"You. It's complicated."

"I'm surprised," She said with a giggle.

"Well your family, you and your girls...."

"Sisters." She corrected.

"Your sisters, are trusted with money and a good amount of it too,"

"you did a poor job of disguising yourself Prince" she snickered

"Well that's not, it's not what you, never mind he said sound a little bit defeated.

"I'll lead you to my home, I'm going that way now,"

"Yes, thank you,"

As they walked through the woods, the walk seemed longer, and on the walk they talk about random things like animals, clothes, books, Lavinia absolutely love's books she had what seemed like millions of them in her tiny room.

One year when she just learned to read, her mother got her a book about flowers, Livia read that book from cover to cover about 10 times.

When they arrived at Livia's house she was nervous for the girls, but to her advantage, you could say, (they where still a good ways out, but close enough that you could see the smoke from

the chimney of the fire place.) Maximus fell or stumbled and cut his hand on a stick that was pointing out of the ground. He had a terrible slash on his right hand and Livia said

"Oh Prince I can fix that or at least tend to it, if you are okay with that" she pleaded.

"Yes please do!" He insisted.

She wrapped his hand gently with cloth, after applying some oil on the wound, then let him rest as she gently combed his hair because it had gotten a little messy when he fell.

He was so grateful for her he that wanted her to know, but he thought as if he would never know how to.

When Maximus was done resting they continued on their journey to her cabin when they reached the cabin the girls Georgina, and Wilhelmina, where over the moon and so mad when Livia told them to give them space because the Prince had important business to talk about.

Now alone in Livia's room Maximus informed her that she and the girls where given the money, including a house, close to the castle it was so close it was in the gated part of the castle too, she said that she would need to think about it, which made the prince tell her about his library, she was sold at that right, there and as she was saying yes to him her sisters trampled in and yelled "YES! she will take it she, deserves every thing that you will give her!" So surprised she said yes. And he said that he can bring them there right now that day.

As they left, Livia looked back watched until it hurt she was sad but glad that God answered her call.

Second Place

Christmas Time

By Sophia Garcia

Sixth Grade

Woolwine Elementary School

One cold winter day, I woke up to the sound of snow falling outside my window. The sky was a soft shade of gray, and everything looked quiet and peaceful. I felt excited because it was Christmas time, the best holiday of the year. My family was getting ready for Christmas morning, and I couldn't wait to see what Santa would bring me.

That morning, we all wore cozy sweaters and drank hot chocolate while we decorated the Christmas tree. The tree sparkled with colorful lights and shiny ornaments, and at the top was a big star. We listened to Christmas music, and I danced around the room. My little brother was excited too, and he kept asking if Santa was coming soon.

Later, we went outside to play in the snow. I made a big snowman. I gave him a carrot nose, button eyes, and a crooked smile. My dog loved to jump and catch snowflakes in the air. We had a snowball fight and built a tiny igloo. It was fun to run around in the cold, crisp air and feel the snow crunch under our feet.

That night, we all sat by the fireplace and told Christmas stories. I loved hearing about Santa and his reindeer flying through the sky. As I looked out the window one last time, I saw the moon shining brightly on the snow covered ground. I felt happy because I knew tomorrow would be Christmas, and I had so many things to be thankful for. It was a perfect Christmas time.

Third Place

The Ride

By Brystol Helms

Sixth Grade

Woolwine Elementary School

Slowly snow is falling, cold and light
Covering the world in a blanket so white
The stockings are hung by the chimney right here

Waiting for Santa to spread Christmas cheer.
The Christmas tree stands merry and bright
Filled with ornaments shining all night.
With joy in the air, and smiles so wide
Christmas is here, so enjoy the ride.

Kindergarten through Third

First Place

Christmas Eve

By Meredith Pilson

Second Grade

Woolwine Elementary School

On Christmas Eve day
we make our way,
to Gamma's house
to eat and play.

Biscuits, gravy, and eggs

for these my tummy begs.

Presents in the other room

We can open them soon.

Aunts, uncles, and boy cousins

Run to the tree with a zoom.

Stockings packed with care

toys are scattered everywhere!

Back home we go

to make cookies with dough.

Listening closely

to hear Santa go HO, HO, HO!

Second Place

Christmas

A Dickens Christmas



**Morgan
Griffith**

Representative

An iconic Christmas story that continues to resonate with my family and many others is Charles Dickens' Christmas classic *A Christmas Carol*.

While the book was first published in 1843 in London, Dickens' writings captivated audiences on both sides of the Atlantic.

Because of his popularity in the United States, Dickens visited numerous American communities for reading tours.

During his 1842 travels, most of which were spent in the Northeast, Dickens even visited Richmond, Virginia!

More than two decades later, Dickens would return to the United States.

In an 1868 performance, President Andrew Johnson watched a Dickens performance at Carroll Hall in Washington, DC. Days later, Dickens and Johnson would meet at the White House.

American audiences were eager to watch the magnificent Charles Dickens in action! While plen-

ty was desired during these performances, perhaps nothing was desired more than a rendition of *A Christmas Carol*.

But that is not the only Dickens Christmastime story.

Another Dickens Christmastime piece that drew acclaim was *The Cricket on the Hearth*.

Under less-than-ideal circumstances, the characters in the story seek to find peace in the world. Many people felt like they could connect to the story's key message.

Although the story does not have any connection to Christmas, *The Cricket on the Hearth* became a popular Dickens Christmas tale!

This is not totally uncommon in American pop culture.

The hit 1934 song, "Winter Wonderland," is written by Felix Bernard and Richard Smith. The song continues to play in public squares, malls and stores.

Yet, the song does not actually celebrate Christmas, just the winter season and snow!

Likewise, while not focused on the theme of Christmas, *The Cricket on the Hearth* is an uplifting story that gained widespread appeal in the 19th century. However, it received much more attention in the United Kingdom than in the United States.

Accordingly, Dickens described *The Cricket on the Hearth* as a "quiet and domestic" novel. The story resonated more with UK audiences seeming-

ly because of its parallels with UK life.

Therefore, American audiences were more likely to catch a Dickens performance of *A Christmas Carol*.

The many iterations of the Christmas classic's main character, Ebenezer Scrooge, is displayed in American literature, cinema and theater.

Scrooge is a contemptible, bitter and divisive figure who lacks feeling and empathy for others.

Throughout the story, Dickens employs different spirits to visit Scrooge. Each spirit tries to compel Scrooge to reflect on his wrongs and change his ways for good.

As we know it, Scrooge undergoes a personal transformation. He becomes a more respectful, humane, and compassionate figure. It is evident to see his generosity at the end of *A Christmas Carol* as he delivers wonderful gifts to those who are less fortunate!

Scrooge's personal growth is a story that compels the heart, body and soul. To some, his transformation is a miracle!

A Christmas Carol challenges us all to strive to be better human beings in our homes, our communities and our lives.

The teachings from this Dickens story strike a similar tune with other cultural and religious readings at this time of year.

For me and my family, we also join Christians around the world to celebrate the joyous story documenting the birth of Jesus Christ!

His birth is a miraculous moment. It serves as a gift from God to save His children from sin and remodel our lives in His image and name.

Jesus teaches us we can be transformed through faith in Him.

Further, Jesus inspired our communities to deliver gifts, such as kindness, charity and humanity.

His miracles and teachings also continue to draw large audiences around the world! This season, many churches will be full of joy, inspired to pray and spread His gifts to others.

This time of year is not just a special time for Christians, but it presents opportunity for people of all backgrounds to come together with their families and celebrate their blessings.

That is why I show appreciation and respect for people of all faiths, religions and beliefs.

As is the case every year, I look forward to reflecting on these impactful and spirited Christmas stories.

We have many blessings to celebrate, especially those that come from the birth of Jesus Christ.

And in the words of Dickens' beloved character from *A Christmas Carol*, Tiny Tim, "God bless us, everyone!"

One more Christmas

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

How many more Christmases will you have? Will you have fifty more? Will you have a dozen more? Maybe you will have just one more, maybe. There are no guarantees of a certain number of more Christmases.

My grandpa Hinkle suffered with heart issues. I remember him suffering an episode where his heart was bothering him and he put nitroglycerin pills under his tongue to calm the effects of his heart issues. "I may never see another Christmas" he stated as his pain eased off and he became more relaxed. Seems like he did celebrate a couple more Christmases and before he died at the age of 83.

Since we aren't sure how many more Christmases we will enjoy, let's make this a good one.

Focus your eyes and mind on the person of Christmas – Jesus. The Shepherds came to see him and left rejoicing at what they saw, heard and experienced. Jesus gave them something to talk about, something to do and their story was compelling. The Wise Men, traveled from a long distance to worship Jesus. They did so because Jesus was worth it. Jesus is worthy of our focus. Our eyes and minds are in so many places today. There is so much to hear and see even if you never leave your house. The television, social media and more are constantly showing us lots of stuff that gets our attention but sometimes makes life fuzzy and mentally chaotic. Focusing our attention on Jesus clears our minds and sharpens our perspectives.

Don't max out. Maxing out is not fun or healthy. This means don't overspend. Don't spend money you don't have. Don't try to do stuff that pushes you to the brink of exhaustion. What good does this do you or anyone if you go in the hole financially and mentally over the holiday? Step back, be reasonable and use common sense in all that you want to do.

Reach out and love others. If this is your last Christmas then you want to let those significant people in your life know that you love them and care about them. They will remember next Christ-

mas that they were loved by you on the previous Christmas.

You may want to do something creative or different for Christmas. Maybe there is someplace special you want to be on Christmas. This is not always possible. Many soldiers will be in distant lands on Christmas. Many relatives will be in distant towns for Christmas. Be where you want to be if you can on Christmas. If you can't, then try to make as many phone calls as possible to those people.

This Christmas, don't be sad, mad or bad but be joyful and celebrate this good day. If we are here, then rejoice. If there is an empty chair at the table, remember that to be absent from the body is to be present with God, if we love and accept him. This is our hope that those who are no longer with us are in a better place than we are and someday we will be with them in that beautiful place.

Regardless of how many Christmases you have left, be filled with joy for this one.

The Happiest Time of the Year?

We've just past Thanksgiving, and now following afterward is Christmas and New Year's Day. Combined, these are often called the "happiest time of the year". But, is it? These three holidays, back to back to back, are often laden with pitfalls, making it more like a "Bermuda Triangle" than the "happiest time" for some.

Am I just being a Scrooge? What's there to worry about?

Cold weather

Cold temperatures, specifically cold air, can induce airway spasms and shortness of breath. They can also constrict blood vessels leading to angina (chest pain) or even heart attacks. If you're lucky enough to have a white Christmas, you may end up shoveling snow, which often leads to heart attacks due to the combination of cold and strenuous labor.

Stress

You know how it goes. Holiday stress. Stress about getting gifts, getting the right gift...not too cheap, but not so expensive that it causes even more post-Christmas stress when you get your credit card bill. Sigh.

Stress about feeding all the people coming over to your house. Who eats what, what allergies do people have, vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free options for everyone, and finally – will it taste good?

Eating holiday fare

Remember that we just came out of Halloween and we're probably polishing off the kids' candy and are now faced with an almost endless supply of treats, desserts, work parties, dinner parties, eggnog, and of course minty, pumpkin-y holiday lattes. The amount of sugar, fat, and excess calories will probably put you deep in the hole even before you start on your New Year's resolutions to eat better, exercise, and lose weight.

But let's be real about this for a second because it's serious stuff.

Fatty foods acutely make your blood likelier to clot, thus increasing your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Sugary foods acutely suppress your immune system, which makes you likelier to get sick, especially with the cold weather, lack of sleep, and stress you will also be dealing with.

Alcohol directly irritates your heart and can put you into atrial fibrillation (a fast and abnormal heart rhythm). In fact, this is so common that it's been dubbed 'Holiday Heart Syndrome'.

Are you scared now?

Fortunately, there's a happy ending to this story. After all, what would you expect from a holiday article?

The happy ending

Cold weather? Dress warmly.

Yes, it can be cold, just dress warm. Use this time to break out your ugly sweaters (we all have them) and layer up, making you nice and toasty and the giver of your ugly sweater very happy.

Gift-giving, party-planning stress? Have a good attitude

Gift giving is stressful, but you know what?

It's been shown that the act of giving a gift actually turns on infection-fighting and immune system-boosting genes. It doesn't work if you get a gift for yourself – seriously! Also, consider group gifts and experiences that bring people together, like coupons for miniature golf, rather than a costly individual gift.

Also, limit the gifts (no one really needs more than one simple gift) and use a budget. Debt is a gift that keeps on giving – giving you pain. Having time off from work shouldn't be used for more shopping; it could be used for more exercise. So, jumpstart your New Year's resolutions at Thanksgiving, and make good decisions throughout the rest of the holidays.

Preparing for parties can be difficult, but there are some ways to limit the stress. For example, allow your friends to bring over their favorite dishes. No one expects you to be the perfect host a la Martha Stewart. Just have a potluck instead of cooking the whole thing. Social interaction has been shown to help cognition and overall well-being so involve everyone's participation in your next big get-together.

The big one: the food

You might be thinking that the above tips are all doable, but the food is the insurmountable challenge. Well, here are a few simple tips.

*Eat mindfully. Don't nibble and snack on everything that's available. Remind yourself that you will have multiple opportunities in the surrounding weeks to eat really delicious things. You won't have to deny yourself too much, so pace yourself!

*Eat before you go to parties so you literally can't cram all of the food and desserts you want to eat in your stomach.

*Remember to eat the healthy options first, and drink a lot of water to fill up your stomach so hunger doesn't weaken your will to control your eating.

*Taste, but don't eat a ton of sweets and desserts. Once again, you'll have many chances to try all sorts of good stuff.

*If you taste something and it's not mind-blowingly delicious, stop eating it! Move on and save your calories for something you'll love.

The most important thing: be grateful

No one has a perfect life but most have a lot to be thankful for. The process of expressing gratitude (writing it down in a journal, saying it out loud, expressing appreciation directly to others, etc.) has been shown to actually reduce death rates in heart patients.

Don't get sucked into the Bermuda Triangle of poor health choices this holiday. We're all adults and we all get to choose what we do and how we feel about what we do. So, what choices are you going to make this holiday season?

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

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Patrick Pioneers

Lucinda Staples Redd Preston (Mrs. William Ballard Preston)

By Beverly Belcher Woody

While researching the life of Dr. W. M. Akers, I learned that he purchased the home of William Wallace Moir and Caroline Virginia Martin Moir to convert into the Stuart Hospital. This home once stood on Blue Ridge Street, between Stuart Baptist Church and the present Blue Ridge Regional Library. That discovery sent me back to a line of research I had begun years earlier involving a remarkable woman with deep Patrick County roots: Lucinda Staples Redd Preston.

In a letter published in The Enterprise in the early 20th century, an anonymous writer born in 1851 in Taylorsville (now Stuart) stated that in the "old Moir homeplace, William Ballard Preston married Lucinda Staples Redd."

Yet, A History of Patrick County, Virginia (p. 355) records that the wedding occurred in 1837 at the Waller Redd home, which once stood near the present First Horizon Bank, which is between the church and the library.

This raises a fascinating question: Was the old Stuart Hospital—formerly the Moir home—also once the home of Waller Redd? If so, the structure may date to around 1816, the year that Waller Redd married Keziah Staples.

Waller Redd, born in 1777 in Henry County, was the son of Revolutionary War Major John Redd and Mary Winston Waller, daughter of Colonel George Waller and Ann Winston Carr—making her a first cousin of Patrick Henry.

Keziah Staples, born in 1792 to Samuel Staples and Lucinda Stovall Penn, was almost certainly born in Patrick County's first notable residence, the Stonewall House.

The Stonewall House was built by Colonel Samuel Staples, who became the county's first Circuit Court Clerk. Construction began in 1775, when Taylorsville was still part of Pittsylvania County. Stone from the foot of Stuart Mountain was hauled by ox wagon—only one load per day. After a year, enough had been gathered for the foundation. Over the next ten years, ox teams hauled stone until the walls—an impressive 24 inches thick—were completed. When finished in 1792, George Washington was President of the United States. The house stood until 1964, when it was razed to make way for the bank at the head of Main Street.

Waller Redd and Keziah Staples were married on December 27, 1816, in Amherst County. Their only child, Lucinda Staples Redd, was born on October 12, 1817. Keziah died just months later at age 28 and was buried in the Stuart Town Cemetery on Chestnut Avenue. Waller died in 1823, leaving six-year-old Lucinda an orphan.

In November 1837, Lucinda married William Ballard Preston, who would later serve as Secretary of the Navy under President Zachary Taylor. Together, they had six children:

Captain Waller Redd Preston (b. 1841), a University of Virginia student who served in the 14th Virginia Cavalry and was tragically killed at Bremond, Texas, in 1872.

Ann Taylor Preston (b. 1843), who married Dr. Walter Coles in 1864 and died four years later at age 28.

James "Patton" Preston (b. 1845), also a member of the 14th Virginia Cavalry, who never married and later managed Smithfield Plantation.

Lucinda Preston (b. 1847), who married William Beale and raised four children at "Tressalia" in Botetourt County. She was chosen as hostess of the Virginia Building at the Jamestown Exposition in 1907 (300th anniversary of the first landing).

Janie Grace Preston (b. 1849), who married Aubin Lee Boulware of King and Queen County and lived in Richmond, where her husband served as an attorney and bank president.

Little Keziah Preston, born in 1854, died in 1861 at age six.

Nowadays, historical Smithfield Plantation is open for tours from spring through fall. <https://www.historicsmithfield.org/>

Below is the fully preserved obituary written by Lucinda's cousin, Samuel Granville Staples (1821–1895), with only minimal corrections to spelling and punctuation:

"On the 17th day of October, 1891, at Smithfield (her residence) in the County of Montgomery, Mrs. Lucy S. Preston (widow of the Hon. William Ballard Preston, deceased) departed this life after an illness of ten days. The disease that terminated her life was pneumonia, and during its early stages her case was



Lucinda Staples Redd Preston, portrait by Harvey Mitchell, Smithfield Plantation

not regarded as hopeless; but, being at the advanced age of seventy-four years, her condition was too feeble to resist the effect of the disease, and the result was she died from sheer exhaustion.

During her entire illness she was attended by every member of her family, who bestowed upon her every attention that love and affection could prompt. She died calmly and peacefully, in the full possession of all her faculties, and just before she breathed her last she exclaimed, 'Nearer, my God, to thee.'

Her mortal remains were borne to their last resting place, attended by a large concourse of relations and friends, and buried at the family cemetery in the grave of her late husband.

Her father, Waller Redd, was the son of Major John Redd of the County of Henry, of Revolutionary memory, who distinguished himself at the Battle of Yorktown and for gallantry was promoted on the field of battle. Waller Redd was for many years clerk of the superior and county courts of Henry and discharged the duties of the two offices with great acceptability. He was a man occupying the highest social position and died in the town of Martinsville (Henry County) on the 23rd of September, 1823.

The mother of Mrs. Preston, Keziah Staples Redd, was the daughter of Col. Samuel Staples, who, for a period of thirty-one years, filled the offices of clerk of the superior and county courts of Patrick with marked ability and fidelity and discharged their various duties to the entire satisfaction of both the bar and the county. He was a man of note, and of great personal popularity and influence in his day, was possessed of a sound mind and discriminating judgment, and died at Patrick Court House of paralysis on the 23rd of March, 1825, in the sixty-third year of his age, universally beloved and respected by all who knew him.

Keziah Staples Redd was a woman of rare intellectual endowments, of sound practical sense, popular among all her neighbors and friends, and died at the residence of Major John Redd in the County of Henry on the 26th of January, 1818, leaving not an enemy behind her.

At an early age Mrs. Preston, then an orphan, was under the guardianship of her grandfather, Major John Redd, but resided at the home of her uncle, Col. Abram Staples, at Patrick Court House, until she became of sufficient age to be sent to school, when she was sent to Salem Female Academy in North Carolina, a noted institution in that day. After attending the exercises of that academy for about two years, she was sent to Philadelphia as a pupil in an institution under the superintendence of Madame Sigourney, a teacher well known to possess all the qualifications necessary for the guidance and instruction of young ladies.

Having finished her education in Philadelphia, she returned to Patrick Court House and became an inmate in the house of her aunt, Mrs. Ruth P. Redd. There she remained, surrounded by every advantage that wealth and high social position could confer, until her marriage in the month of November 1837 to the Hon. William Ballard Preston of Montgomery.

Smithfield, the residence of Mr. Preston, was the resort of many of the first families of Virginia and South Carolina, such as the Hamptons, Prestons, McDowells, Floyds, Watts, and others of high repute,

The following extract we clip from the *Henry Bulletin* of Martinsville, Va. It will be seen that Hillsboro was represented in this interesting gathering by the presence of our accomplished and respected belle, Miss Lucy Bell Smith:

Last evening, at the residence of Capt. Jas. H. Redd, on Church St., a number of the relatives and friends of his family assembled at high tea. Among the relatives we would mention Mrs. Lucinda Preston and Mrs. Lucy Beale. The former is the widow of the late Hon. Wm. Ballard Preston, and granddaughter of that noble old Roman and patriot, Maj. John Redd, who represented Henry county in the Virginia Legislature for several terms, and voted for the famous Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of 1798-'99; and who, by the way, was a soldier of the Revolution, and was with Washington at the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. He represented Henry county in the Legislature at the time that General Washington was President.

A singular occurrence in this connection is the fact that at this pleasant meeting at Capt. Redd's were representatives of five generations of the Redd family, to-wit: Mrs. Lucy D. Ballard, now about ninety years of age, and the only living daughter of Maj. John Redd, Mrs. Ballard Preston and Mrs. Flora Drewery, grand children; Mrs. Lucy Beale and Miss Ruth Redd, the great-grand children; Miss Lucy Bell Smith, of Ohio, the great-great-grand child, and Miss Gracie Reamey, the great-great-great-grand child. Possibly such an array of generations was never before assembled in Virginia, certainly not in this county. Five generations present at an evening entertainment!

Hillsboro, Ohio News-Herald June 13, 1889

who habitually resorted there to spend the summer. Mrs. Preston discharged her household duties with liberal hospitality and with rare dignity and grace, until Mr. Preston was made Secretary of the Navy under President Zachary Taylor, when the family removed to Washington.

There, as the wife of the Secretary of the Navy, she maintained in the higher circles of society an enviable position, and she showed herself capable of a most elevated association with the more refined people of that city. Mrs. Preston was a lady of ordinary attractions and accomplishments. She had a well-modulated voice and was quite fluent in conversation. Her manners were refined, gentle, modest, and reserved, and she was usually retiring in her disposition.

There was a wonderful harmony in her character, and she possessed a wonderful degree that delicate tact in her general interaction with others that rendered all who met her easy in her company. She was of a calm and happy temperament, gentle in her character, and was possessed of many sterling virtues as well as sweetness of disposition. She was devoted to her children, her relatives, and her warm personal friends, and she was never so happy as when enjoying an unreserved conversation in their company.

As has already been stated, she met death with a calm and peaceful resignation to the Divine will, and she has gone to reap her reward among the spirits of the blessed, in that world above, which is a world of love, where hearts may be one forever. The writer of this feeble tribute to her memory was raised in the same home with her. He was her constant associate and playmate while they were children. He learned to love and cherish her as a sister, and the many happy hours they spent together during their early days will be fresh and green in his memory while life lasts.

"The pains of death are past,
Labor and sorrow cease,
And life's long warfare closed at last,
Her soul is found in peace."

Next week, we will try to discover more about the families who lived in the home that would become Stuart Hospital, namely the Moir family. If you have any questions, comments, or story ideas, you may contact Woody 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 Won't Social Security Give me my Benefits?

Dear Rusty: I called the Social Security office, as well as went with my husband when he went to collect his Social Security. Because I work full-time (at about \$800/week), they said I could not file for my Social Security. Yet I seem to read articles all the time about people doing so.

My husband just filed for his benefits and is now collecting them. Out of the two of us, his Social Security will be larger. Please advise me.

Signed: Wanting my Benefits

Dear Wanting my Benefits: If you have not yet reached your SS full retirement age (FRA) and you are working full time, you are likely being affected by Social Security's Annual Earnings Test, which limits how much you can earn while collecting Social Security prior to your FRA. Your FRA is somewhere between 66 and 67, depending on when you were born. The annual earnings limit for those collecting SS benefits prior to FRA in 2025 is \$23,400 (changes yearly) and, if that is exceeded, Social Security

will take away benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit. If you applied for your benefits and are still working, and were denied, it's likely because Social Security determined that your current annual earnings considerably exceed the earnings limit and, thus, you cannot collect benefits. That's because the penalty for exceeding the limit would be more than your benefit amount. FYI, the earnings limit will go away when you reach your full retirement age so, after FRA, you can claim your benefits even if you are still working. Or if you stop working before your FRA you can collect your SS benefits at that time.

None of this means you are losing money, because your monthly SS payment will continue to grow until you later claim (e.g., after you stop working, or only work part-time), or until you reach 70 years of age. When you later claim, your monthly benefit will be higher and, depending on your longevity, you may recover what you didn't get now because you are working. And that includes both your own SS retirement benefit and any spousal boost you may be entitled to from your husband.

So, my suggestion is this: as long as you are

working full time and exceeding Social Security's annual earnings limit, continue to wait to claim your Social Security. Then, when you reach your full retirement age (again, between 66 and 67, depending on the year you were born), or if you stop working before that, go ahead and apply for Social Security again. At that time, your application will be approved, and you will be awarded your own earned SS retirement amount plus any additional amount you may be due as your husband's spouse. To be entitled to a spousal boost from your husband, your own FRA entitlement must be less than 50% of your husband's FRA entitlement. But the amount you get will be reduced if you claim before your full retirement age.

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Winners

(cont. from page 3)

building snowmen or making snow angels. Lots of people love sledding. Some people use sleds or really big pots. It's finally Christmas Eve and all the kids are waiting for Christmas Day. It's finally the big day Christmas! All the kids are looking under the Christmas tree to see if Santa came! Lots of people got toys or clothes but everybody loves Santa. And always remember he's always watching.

Third Place**Rudolph Guides My Sleigh Tonight**

*Arianna Whitt,
First Grade
Meadows of Dan Elementary*

School

Santa was on the way back from the North Pole. He noticed that he was missing Rudolph. "Oh no!" shouted Santa! "How can I miss him with that red nose?" Rudolph was far away. Santa couldn't drive the sleigh any longer because Rudolph wasn't there to guide the way with his red nose. Santa searched everywhere. He yelled, "Rudolph!! Where are you?" He yelled and yelled, "I need you to guide my sleigh tonight." Rudolph heard Santa and he came back. Santa was so excited that all he could say was "Hooray!!! Rudolph is back!! Now we can deliver presents!"

Honorable Mentions Grades K-3**First Grade****My English Bulldog**

One Christmas Eve, there was snow on the ground and that was when I seen the English Bulldog. My family went to the animal shelter to spread Christmas cheer to all the animals. I was helping them.

I adopted the English Bulldog. Her name is Cookie. I took care of her. It was also her birthday. She turned one. It was the best birthday ever. I made her a green and red birthday cake and I gave her a bone.

That Christmas Eve night, Cookie snuggled with me until I went to sleep. When Santa came he left a squeaky toy for Cookie and he left me a doll. It was the most amazing Christmas in the world.

*Dallas Leviner,
WES*

Our elf on the shelf is so funny. He moves when it's not sunny. Once I caught him fishing with a gummy worm. Maybe someday soon he'll learn. It's better to stay out of trouble. Or maybe I'll have to put him in a bubble.

*Waylon Lewis Fain,
WES*

Rudolph is my pet deer. He has some other friends. They like to play games. Tag is their favorite.

*Grayson Iroler,
BRES*

I am Crystal Reindeer. I help Santa. We give presents to kids.

Second Grade**Snowflakes**

*By Liam Whitt
MODE*

White pretty snowflakes in many different sizes and shapes.

Falling from the sky.

Falling to the ground from here to there.

Oh!! What a pretty sight to see!!

Ted's Best Christmas

*By Kreedynce Flippin
WES*

There once was a little boy named Ted. Ted was ten years old, and he lived in a red house on Main Street. Ted loved living in a red house. Living in a red house re-

*Zaidee Crispin,
BRES*

Once there was a reindeer. The reindeer's name was Autumn. She is a reindeer who lives in the North Pole. I see many snowflakes in the North Pole. Santa told me to lead the sleigh.

*Naomi Wood,
BRES*

Hey! I am Jay the Reindeer. I do stuff. I pull the sled for Santa to give presents to the people.

*Chipp Hill,
BRES*

Hi, my name is Angel. I gift kids with presents when it is Christmas.

*Arnalaya Frost,
BRES*

I'm Dasher. I lead the sled. I can see in the dark. All the kids are getting presents from Santa. I'm the one who fights back predators.

*Alex Pack,
BRES*

I am Jay the Reindeer. I pull the sleigh tonight. Me and Santa go all over the world.

*Branson Hodges,
BRES*

I help Santa with presents. My name is Beau the Little Reindeer.

*Beau Engle,
BRES*

I help Santa pull the sled. He

minded Ted of his favorite holiday - Christmas. Christmas time always made Ted happy. But not this year. Ted was sad because every day he went to school to hear stories of all of his friends' elves. He didn't understand why he didn't have an elf. Every day leading up to Christmas, Ted got more and more tired of listening to all of the fun things his friends' elves were up to.

Finally, Christmas had arrived. He jumped out of bed and went to the living room. He sat and waited for his mom, dad, and sister to wake up. When they got out of bed and went to the living room, they began opening presents. Everyone was excited to open presents. Ted

Sports Briefs**By Ashlee Mullis****Varsity Lady Cougars Defeat****North Stokes**

The Varsity Lady Cougars traveled to North Stokes, Friday, December 19, getting a 55-46 win over the Lady Vikings. Kendra Worley led the Cougars with 12 points, going 2 for 4 behind the arc. Worley had 11 rebounds, 2 assists, 6 deflections, and 6 steals in the win. Gracen Conner had 10 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 6 deflections, and 6 steals. Sheyan Lester had 8 points, 4 rebounds, 2 assists, 2 deflections, and 2 blocks. Journey Moore had 8 points, 2 rebounds, 3 assists, 4 deflections, and 5 steals. Abby Royall had 7 points, 6 rebounds, 1 assist, 5 deflections, and 3 steals.

Varsity Boys Continue Winning Season

The Varsity Boys Basketball Team got a 44-41 win over Staunton River, Thursday, December 18th. Nathan Callahan had 18 points, 5 rebounds, and 2 assists. Jayden Corns had 13 points, 9 rebounds, 3 blocks, and 1 assist. Bronson Edwards had 10 points, 6 rebounds, and 1 steal. Friday, December 19, the Cougars got a huge 70-67 win at North Stokes in an electric atmosphere. Corns put up 24 points and pulled down and impressive 18 rebounds. Andersen Brim had 14

rebounds. Andersen Brim had 14 drops the presents off the sled. I give Santa stuff to help build presents.

*Daniel Scales,
BRES*

My name is Rudolph. I pull the sled. I help deliver the presents.

*Naomi Bunn,
BRES*

Once there was a reindeer who was named Dasher. His job was to lead. Then there was a new reindeer. His name was John. They were good friends. They both help Santa.

*Oliver Thompson,
BRES*

I am helping Santa with his presents. I am loading up the presents. My name is Rudolph.

*Conner Gibson,
BRES*

Hi, my name is Ice Flake. I'm the littlest reindeer and I help Santa with the presents. We deliver the

got to open the first present. It was a toy monster truck. His sister, Julie, opened the next one. It was a baby doll. Then his mom opened a purse. Ted's dad then opened a new drill. Then, Ted saw a mysterious package with no label to say who it was from. He opened it and looked in to find an Elf on the Shelf! He had been waiting for this present for a while. He named his elf "Ted" after himself. Finally! Having an elf made Ted very happy. It was his favorite present that Christmas. Years went by while Ted enjoyed time with his family and friends. Ted got older and got married. His kids had the same problem of not getting an elf until later, just like

Ted. This continued generation after generation through the years.

Our Elves

*By Hattie Griffin
WES*

On Sunday night when we were in my sister's room setting up her Christmas tree our elf named Bacon fell off our big Christmas tree. My sister chose to lay Bacon in the floor under the Christmas tree and put a blanket over him and the grinch elf. In the morning, the elves had moved to a different place and Bacon had a band aid on his leg and the grinch elf was laying down on Bacon. Our elves are always getting into mischief.

*Harper Lawless,
BRES*

Hi, my reindeer name is Jay. I help Santa deliver presents to kids who live in houses. Then Santa and his reindeer deliver presents. Santa and his reindeer go back to the North Pole.

*Joshdi De Jesus,
BRES*

mas tree. She sees all the presents. "MOM!" she yells. Mom and Dad come down the stairs. Mom and Dad gasped, "He came!"

Rose checks her stocking. "A candy cane!" she yells. She eats the candy cane then she opens her presents. "Best Christmas ever!" Rose shouts. "Mom, can I go play in the snow?" Mom says, "yes" and Rose heads out to play in the 10 inches of snow. "WOW" says Rose as she runs out the door.

Decorations

*By Ariel Crews
BRES*

D - December

E - Elves

C - Cookies

O - Oranges

R - Reindeer

A - Antlers

T - Tree

(See Honorable Mentions p. 12)

Third Grade**Jesus was born!**

*By Elly Griffin
WES*

Joyful

Everlasting

Sweet

Understanding

Savior

Way maker

Amazing

Salvation

Beautiful

Only Jesus

Right

Never wrong

Christmas

*By Bobby Barr
BRES*

The best holiday of December is Christmas. Christmas celebrates Jesus' birthday, presents, and Santa Claus. Also, there is snow in Christmas. And you get time off of school. You spend time with your

family and play games. The feast and getting presents are the best things about Christmas!

Last Christmas

*By Harley Bartley
BRES*

Last Christmas our family was opening a lot of presents. I was taking pictures. I tried to take a picture of my grandmother. There was so much laughter. I got the picture taken, finally! We ate chicken nuggets, fries, and ranch sauce. Some of the others in my family got pizza to eat. I remember I got money to buy a game I really wanted badly. I got pajamas that I really needed and a farm toy and even a scooter. I liked the scooter a whole lot! A motorized scooter is something I hope to get one day. I could ride it at the park for 30 minutes. Then go home. Christmas is so very nice!

How Jesus Was Born

*By Adalyne Bowman
BRES*

Once there was a girl and a boy, their name was Mary and Joseph. They fell in love with each other. Well one night an angel came to Mary and said, "Mary you are going to have a baby soon" he said. She was shocked and they had a boy. The angel told them to name him "Jesus". Some people worship him and for this every Christmas Jesus feels happy.

Christmas Eve

*By Delilah Jane Clayton
BRES*

"I love Christmas so much!" says Rose. Mom says, "It's time for bed, if not Santa won't come!!" Rose runs to her bed. "Good night Mom," says Rose. The next day Rose jumps out of her bed and rushes to the Christ-

(See Honorable Mentions p. 12)



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TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 742 SPRING ROAD, PATRICK SPRINGS, VA 24133. In execution of a certain Deed of Trust dated October 25, 2021, in the original principal amount of \$133,536.00 recorded in the Clerk's Office, Circuit Court for Patrick County, Virginia as Instrument No. 210002354. The undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction in the front of the Circuit Court building for Patrick County, 101 West Blue Ridge Street, Stuart, Virginia, or any such temporary alternative Circuit Court location designated by the Judges of the Circuit Court, on February 26, 2026, at 4:45 PM, the property described in said Deed of Trust, located at the above address, and more particularly described as follows: ALL THOSE THREE (3) CERTAIN TRACTS OF LAND, TOGETHER WITH THE IMPROVEMENTS THEREON, LYING AND BEING IN MAYO RIVER MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT OF PATRICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA, DESIGNATED AS PARCEL "A" CONTAINING 0.480 ACRE, PARCEL "B" CONTAINING 0.024 ACRE, AND PARCEL "C" CONTAINING 0.031 ACRE AS SHOWN ON THAT SURVEY ENTITLED "EDNA M. KEITH" PREPARED BY LAWRENCE W. COCKRAM, LLS, DATED AUGUST 24, 1987 RECORDED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PATRICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA, IN DEED BOOK 259, PAGE 739. TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit often percent (10%) of the sale price or ten percent (10%) of the original principal balance of the subject Deed of Trust, whichever is lower, in the form of cash or certified funds payable to the Substitute Trustee must be present at the time of the sale. The balance of the purchase price will be due within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Purchaser's deposit may be forfeited to Trustee. Time is of the essence. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser may, if provided by the terms of the Trustee's Memorandum of Foreclosure Sale, be entitled to a \$50 cancellation fee from the Substitute Trustee, but shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagor or the Mortgagee's attorney. A form copy of the Trustee's memorandum of foreclosure sale and contract to purchase real property is available for viewing at www.bwwsales.com. Additional terms, if any, to be announced at the sale and the Purchaser may be given the option to execute the contract of sale electronically. This is a communication from a debt collector and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. The sale is subject to seller confirmation. Substitute Trustee: Equity Trustees, LLC, 8100 Three Chopt Road, Suite 240, Richmond, VA 23229. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Virginia Pre-Sale Department of counsel for Equity Trustees, LLC at 301-961-6555, website: www.bwwsales.com. VA-378545-3.

LEGAL

BWW# VA-5/8545-3

TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 742 SPRING ROAD, PATRICK SPRINGS, VA 24133. In execution of a certain Deed of Trust dated October 25, 2021, in the original principal amount of \$133,536.00 recorded in the Clerk's Office, Circuit Court for Patrick County, Virginia as Instrument No. 210002354. The undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction in the front of the Circuit Court building for Patrick County, 101 West Blue Ridge Street, Stuart, Virginia, or any such temporary alternative Circuit Court location designated by the Judges of the Circuit Court, on February 26, 2026, at 4:45 PM, the property described in said Deed of Trust, located at the above address, and more particularly described as follows: ALL THOSE THREE (3) CERTAIN TRACTS OF LAND, TOGETHER WITH THE IMPROVEMENTS THEREON, LYING AND BEING IN MAYO RIVER MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT OF PATRICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA, DESIGNATED AS PARCEL "A" CONTAINING 0.480 ACRE, PARCEL "B" CONTAINING 0.024 ACRE, AND PARCEL "C" CONTAINING 0.031 ACRE AS SHOWN ON THAT SURVEY ENTITLED "EDNA M. KEITH" PREPARED BY LAWRENCE W. COCKRAM, LLS, DATED AUGUST 24, 1987 RECORDED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PATRICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA, IN DEED BOOK 259, PAGE 739. TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit often percent (10%) of the sale price or ten percent (10%) of the original principal balance of the subject Deed of Trust, whichever is lower, in the form of cash or certified funds payable to the Substitute Trustee must be present at the time of the sale. The balance of the purchase price will be due within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Purchaser's deposit may be forfeited to Trustee. Time is of the essence. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser may, if provided by the terms of the Trustee's Memorandum of Foreclosure Sale, be entitled to a \$50 cancellation fee from the Substitute Trustee, but shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagor or the Mortgagee's attorney. A form copy of the Trustee's memorandum of foreclosure sale and contract to purchase real property is available for viewing at www.bwwsales.com. Additional terms, if any, to be announced at the sale and the Purchaser may be given the option to execute the contract of sale electronically. This is a communication from a debt collector and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. The sale is subject to seller confirmation. Substitute Trustee: Equity Trustees, LLC, 8100 Three Chopt Road, Suite 240, Richmond, VA 23229. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Virginia Pre-Sale Department of counsel for Equity Trustees, LLC at 301-961-6555, website: www.bwwsales.com. VA-378545-3.

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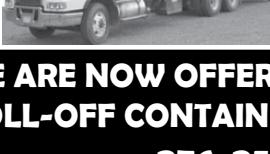
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Timothy Jacob Hooker

Timothy Jacob Hooker, 62, of Patrick Springs, VA entered into his heavenly home on Sunday, December 14, 2025 at SOVAH Health in Martinsville, VA. He was born in Mt. Airy, North Carolina on July 1, 1963 to the late Ralph Jacob Hooker and Alice Lawson Hooker. In addition to his father, he was preceded in death by numerous Aunts and Uncles.

He was survived by his wife of 15 years, Andrea Clark Hooker of Patrick Springs; mother, Alice Lawson Hooker of Stuart; a brother, Mark Hooker (Wilma) of Fancy Gap; niece, Devan Smith (Brandon) of Lawsonville, NC; great-nephew, Seth Lee Smith; great-niece, Emma Mae Smith both of Lawsonville, NC; aunts, Carlene Hylton, Linda Hughes, Nina Hylton, Bonnie Lawson, and Roxie Lawson.



December 18, 2025 at 2:00 P.M. at Buffalo Ridge Pentecostal Holiness Church with Pastor Doug Shuff Jr., and Pastor Samuel Leonard officiating. Burial will immediately follow in the church cemetery. Family will receive friends one hour prior to the service on Thursday. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Patrick Henry Volunteer Fire Department, 3125 County Line Road, Patrick Springs, VA 24133, or SPCA of Martinsville and Henry County, 132 Joseph Martin Highway, Martinsville VA, 24112. Online condolences may be made by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Tim loved the New York Yankees, Bluegrass music, and his animals. Funeral service for Mr. Hooker will be held on Thursday, December 14, 2025 at 2:00 P.M. at Buffalo Ridge Pentecostal Holiness Church with Pastor Doug Shuff Jr., and Pastor Samuel Leonard officiating. Burial will immediately follow in the church cemetery. Family will receive friends one hour prior to the service on Thursday. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Patrick Henry Volunteer Fire Department, 3125 County Line Road, Patrick Springs, VA 24133, or SPCA of Martinsville and Henry County, 132 Joseph Martin Highway, Martinsville VA, 24112. Online condolences may be made by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Unemployment rate decreases, continued year-over-year job gains

Monthly Employment, Labor Force, and Unemployment Indicators

(000s, unless otherwise stated)

	Employment - LAUS		Labor Force - LAUS		Unemployment - LAUS			Non-farm Payroll Employment - CES	
	Level	Δ	Level	Δ	Level	Δ	Rate %	Level	Δ
January 2022-December 2024*	4,255.8	207.8	4,374.1	224.4	118.2	16.6	2.7	4004.6	269.3
January 2025	4,464.0	0.4	4,601.1	2.6	137.1	2.2	3.0	4267.1	-6.8
February 2025	4,455.7	-8.3	4,596.1	-4.9	140.4	3.4	3.1	4265.5	-1.6
March 2025	4,441.0	-14.7	4,586.6	-9.5	145.6	5.2	3.2	4272.2	6.7
April 2025	4,427.6	-13.4	4,579.6	-7.0	152.0	6.4	3.3	4274.9	2.7
May 2025	4,412.2	-15.4	4,568.3	-11.3	156.1	4.1	3.4	4276.7	1.8
June 2025	4,398.1	-14.0	4,558.4	-9.8	160.3	4.2	3.5	4271.1	-5.6
July 2025	4,389.9	-8.2	4,552.6	-5.8	162.7	2.4	3.6	4274.4	3.3
August 2025	4,384.9	-5.0	4,547.7	-4.9	162.8	0.1	3.6	4283.4	9.0
September 2025	4,380.1	-4.8	4,540.3	-7.4	160.2	-2.6	3.5	4278.4	-5.0
EOP	4,380.1	124.3	4,540.3	166.2	160.2	42.0	3.5	4278.4	273.8

Levels reflect the January 2022 level. Deltas refer to change in each statistic over the January 2022-December 2024 period. End of period ("EOP") deltas reflect the cumulative change in economic indicators from January 2022.

Virginia's unemployment rate declined to 3.5 percent in September, remaining 0.9 percentage points below the national rate, which rose to 4.4 percent, Gov. Glenn Youngkin said last week. Over the past year, the Commonwealth has recorded a gain of 28,200 nonfarm jobs, and since January 2022, total nonfarm employment has increased by 273,800, reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

August's original estimates were revised upward by 1,800 jobs to a total of 9,000. Preliminary seasonally adjusted nonfarm payroll data from BLS show a 5,000-job decrease in September, driven entirely by a model-based reduction in state government employment. Commonwealth administrative payroll records, however, indicate that actual state government employment increased in September, underscoring a divergence between the federal model and actual payroll data. A substantial future upward revision of thousands of jobs is expected.

"Virginia's job market continues to demonstrate sustained strength, with more than 270,000 jobs added since this administration began," said Youngkin. "The reported decline in state government employment reflects a statistical adjustment, not a real reduction. Our own payroll data show job growth continuing across state government and throughout the Commonwealth. Employment is rising,

investment is accelerating, and opportunities continue to expand for Virginians."

According to BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics ("LAUS", or "the household survey") preliminary release, the labor force decreased by 7,418 to 4,540,292 as the number of unemployed residents decreased by 2,631 to 160,199. The Commonwealth's labor force participation rate decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 64.6 percent in September. The labor force participation rate measures the proportion of the civilian population age 16 and older that is employed or actively looking for work.

The LAUS survey is based on household interviews conducted each month for the Bureau of Labor Statistics and provides comprehensive data on the labor force, including those who are employed and unemployed. Establishment survey data reflects changes for updated seasonal adjustment factors, and industry classification conversions (NAICS), as part of the annual benchmarking process.

The household survey only distinguishes between whether a person is employed or unemployed, whereas CES counts each employee that is on an employer's payroll. CES excludes business owners, self-employed persons, unpaid volunteers and private household workers, and those on unpaid leave or not working because of a labor dispute.

Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Spangler, age 71 of Meadows of Dan, Virginia, passed away on December 15, 2025, at Lewis Gale Montgomery Medical Center. She was born on May 31, 1954, in Montour Falls, New York to the late Floyd and Violet Maggart.

She was a nurse extend at R. J. Reynolds Memorial Hospital in Stuart, where she met and married the love of her life, the late Larry Kent Spangler. Beth loved to travel, go on Saturday car rides, tending to her flowers, and her beloved Blue Ridge Mountains.

In addition to her

Elizabeth Ann Spangler



parents and husband, she was preceded in death by one brother, David Maggart; and two sisters, Joan Hall and Elaine Greenfield.

Beth is survived by her son, Todd Eiklor of the home, her

Debbie Brackins, Kyle and Donna Murray, and Charles Henry Murray; and several cousins.

The funeral service for Charles will be held on Saturday, December 20, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at Abiding Grace Pentecostal Holiness Church with Pastor Jamie Stokes and Pastor Wade Edwards officiating. Burial will immediately follow in the Hooker Family Cemetery in Meadows of Dan.

The family will receive friends on Friday evening at the church from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Moody Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements, and online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moodyfuneralservices.com.

Anthony

(cont. from page 1)

before a final vote is pursued.

"The only paper that had published a single announcement was *The Enterprise* weekly publication. That was posted on August 27, 2025. It appears that your department failed to legally advertise this intention," he said.

The legal ad was published in *The Enterprise* on Aug. 13 and Aug. 27, as requested by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). However, a publication outside of the county failed to get the ad in the print edition as required.

At a previous meeting, Anthony said Patrick County Schools Superintendent Dr. Jason Wood requested the board to close the road section to ensure safety for children crossing the road when going to and from the gymnasium. However, he noted the resolution filed by the county on this matter states the road closure is for reasons other than the safety of children.

"It reads as follows: Whereas, the county has notified the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) of its desire to discontinue a portion of Dogwood Road, Route 694 depicted within the sketch related to the road no longer provides sufficient public convenience to warrant maintenance at public expense which sketch is incorporated herein by reference, and whereas, this portion of road identified to be discontinued, is deemed to no longer serve public convenience warranting maintenance at public expense," Anthony read.

"This failure to advertise the in-

tentions in two local papers, two weeks prior to the voting, and the incorrect reasoning for closing the road filed by the Patrick County Administration office, has made this resolution an illegal document," he said.

In the 100-plus years since the school opened, Anthony said no human has been struck or injured while crossing this road.

"Our community signed a petition opposing the road closure and offered good alternatives that will safeguard our children. We collected 466 signatures opposing the closing, however our community's request fell on political deaf ears. The matter was immediately voted on, and the decision to close the road was made before even looking at or considering our alternatives," he said.

VDOT also presented alternatives, some of which were presented by community members along with their petition. Anthony said the alternative solutions were not reviewed or considered.

"The board of supervisors and the Patrick County School Board have done their best to silence and disenfranchise 3,700 Mayo River District voters through bringing in outside persuaders from other districts to disillusion the people of Patrick County," he said.

Anthony added he believes this matter should have been voted on by Mayo River District residents and not the board.

"This entire push for our road closing has all been for personal gain. We are pursuing help to correct this matter to higher authorities," he said.

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PATRICK PULPITS

Christmas is Good News

Dr. Glenn Mollette

Christmas is good news. Christ the Savior is born. This declaration is embraced daily by billions around the planet and especially on Christmas day.

There is more to Christmas day than the celebration of the birth of Jesus. We utilize the day for family gatherings, gift exchanges, and to eat more than most other times of the year. We get fatter so that on New Year's day we can make another resolution that we are going to eat less and exercise more. We play the Santa Claus game and always hope we can catch a glimpse of him racing through the sky.

A lot goes on at Christmas. Many people spend money they don't have to give gifts that others may not really want or need. We cram our schedules full of dinners, parties and other appointments that could just as easily be done the first week or two in January. For some reason it seems so much has to be done by Christmas day.

Christmas is a great time for the little children who don't have many Christmases to compare to the present. They are mostly looking at today without much regard for the past. This is a perspective that we lose as we become adults and especially older adults. It became impossible for us. If we have any memory left at all we start comparing our Christmases. We remember

a special Christmas in the past. We remember a special meal. We remember special people and the time when everybody was together. We remember when children were younger or when grandparents were still alive. At some point and time on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day these old times seem to haunt us.

Loneliness is common to all of us at some point and time in our lives. We are lonely for those who made us laugh. We are lonely for those who cared for us or those for whom we cared. We get lonely for the simple things that brought us such internal joy.

Today we often try harder to create a magical moment. We spend more, bake more, try to do more when in fact, we are trying to fill a vacuum that often isn't filled. We can't bring back a child, parent or friend who is no longer with us. We will always miss them. That hole in our hearts can't be filled.

We know by now, the good news that Jesus was born, lived, died and arose from the grave as written in scripture. He came to give us peace, comfort, hope and to fill that cavern in each of our lives. He gives us hope that we will see our loved ones again in a festive way that will far surpass our earthly Christmas celebrations.

Tonight, and this week, may our focus be on Jesus. His joy and love are the reasons we celebrate.

Investors, don't let scammers steal your holiday spirit

Don't let fraudsters take the "ho, ho, ho" out of your holiday season.

The State Corporation Commission's Division of Securities and Retail Franchising and the North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA), of which the division is a member, are warning investors that bad actors are preparing to unwrap a new generation of sophisticated schemes. In some cases, they simply put a new twist on existing scams.

According to NASAA's 2025 Enforcement Report, state securities regulators conducted over 8,800 active investigations in 2024, leading to more than \$259 million in monetary fines and restitution. At the Virginia SCC, in 2024 the division received 238 complaints and conducted 149 investigations leading to 14 civil enforcement actions and \$381,000 in penalties and monetary relief for the benefit of investors. Nationwide, data reveals that while scammers are using new technologies like artificial intelligence to dress up their schemes, the goal remains the same: separating victims from their hard-earned money.

"Rapid technological advancements and the rise of artificial intelligence give scam artists new tools to steal your money," said Division Director Doug Joyce. "Not every investment offer is what it seems, and many bogus offers prey on investors' fear of missing out."

Joyce encourages Virginia investors

to check every investment opportunity twice, as well as the person offering it, so you don't wind up with a stocking full of coal.

Based on data from NASAA's 2025 Enforcement Report and its annual survey of top investor threats, the division cautions Virginians regarding the schemes below:

• Affinity or "pig butchering" schemes: A major focus of 2025 enforcement, this scheme combines romance and finance. Scammers befriend victims online, build trust over time, and convince them to invest heavily in fake platforms before disappearing with the funds.

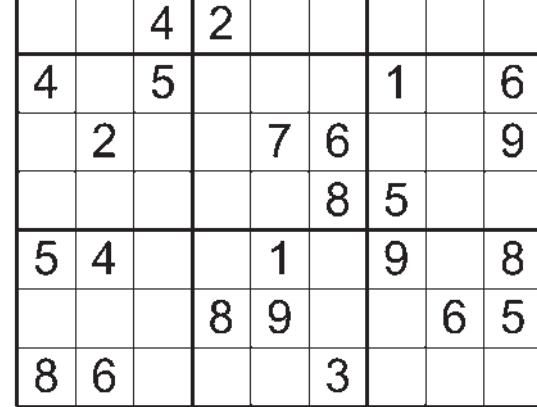
• Scams targeting older investors: In 2024, regulators nationwide investigated over 1,600 cases involving senior victims. Older investors are specifically targeted with traditional scams involving promissory notes and equities, as well as newer digital frauds.

• Unregistered solicitors: Despite professional-looking websites and pitches, many sellers are not licensed. In 2024, regulators nationwide opened 944 investigations involving unregistered individuals.

In Virginia, you can find more information about protecting your investments and how to report suspected investment fraud at InvestWiselyVA.com or by calling 804-371-9051 or 1-800-552-7945 (toll-free). Learn about other top investor threats in this NASAA advisory.

OBITUARY SUBMISSION DEADLINE
MONDAY AT NOON

Weekly SUDOKU



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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging

◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. The main Christmas story is paraphrased from which two New Testament books (KJV)? *Mark/John, Acts/Romans, Matthew/Luke, Jude/Revelation*
2. Who visited Jesus on the night of His birth and found Mary, Joseph and the babe lying in a manger? *Innkeeper, Shepherds, Herod, Magi*
3. Where was the young child when the Magi came to visit Him to present gifts? *Manger, Under the stars, House, Temple*
4. How many times does the word "Christmas" appear in the Bible (KJV)? *Zero, 1, 2, 7*
5. Who was King of Judaea at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem? *Solomon, Herod, Balak, Belshazzar*
6. What animals were present at Jesus' birth? *Lions and bears, Sheep and goats, Cows and donkeys, No mention in Bible*

ANSWERS: 1) Matthew/Luke, 2) Shepherds, 3) House, 4) Zero, 5) Herod, 6) No mention in Bible

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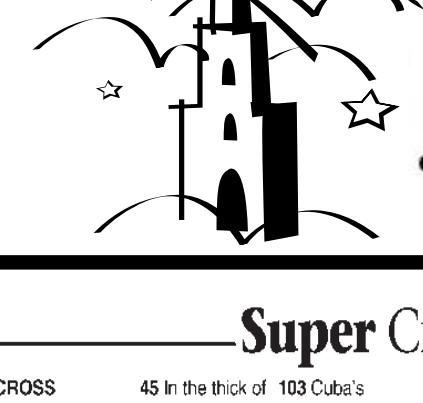
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SIX-E-SOMETHINGS

ACROSS

- 1 Audibly
- 6 Mission —
- 11 Spill the beans
- 15 Golf coups
- 19 Perceive
- 20 — Good Feelings
- 21 Many a "Hee Haw" character
- 22 Boxing event
- 23 Involuntary leg reactions
- 25 Stimulate
- 27 — yung (Chinese dish)
- 28 Rocket
- 29 Relative of a tank top
- 31 "O Fortuna" composer Carl
- 33 Some arm muscles, informally
- 35 No. on a road sign
- 36 "And that's that"
- 37 Note that recommends a job applicant, e.g.
- 43 Wood-dressing tools
- 44 Pigsty stuff
- 45 In the thick of
- 46 Dark, gloomy California
- 48 Fast, sporty auto
- 51 "My treat"
- 52 Greek "S"
- 54 Face cover
- 56 WWW address
- 59 Longer-than-normal prison term
- 60 Long-unshaven
- 67 What "have solved" is in, in terms of grammar
- 73 Ad awards
- 74 Utilize a Juul device, e.g.
- 75 Aided in evil
- 77 In bed
- 83 Yoko of the avant-garde
- 84 Utters
- 85 Stimulate
- 86 "Dame" Everage
- 87 Cleric's home
- 89 Oregano, e.g.
- 90 Telly
- 91 "Help us!"
- 92 Cat food brand
- 96 Innermost parts
- 103 Cuba's largest city
- 105 "Norma —"
- 106 Get it wrong
- 107 Cel figure
- 108 Fir or spruce
- 113 Lingus
- 115 Cato's 1,101
- 116 Monopoly expense
- 117 2020 drama thriller film
- 120 El —, Texas
- 121 "Why should — you?"
- 122 Concur
- 123 Carried, as a load
- 124 Loads
- 125 Stitches up
- 126 Luncheetimes, often
- 127 Pack-toting equines
- 128 Yoko of the avant-garde
- 129 "Ciao!"
- 130 Old Iranian ruler
- 131 "NCIS" network
- 132 Disaster relief gp.
- 133 "Cato's to be"
- 134 Insufficient
- 135 Single-named supermodel
- 136 "Blade" star Wesley
- 137 Prior to, in odes
- 138 Futuristic sci-fi play of 1921
- 139 "Blade" star Wesley
- 140 Mortgage claim
- 141 Case for ova
- 142 Italy's capital
- 143 "Cato's to be"
- 144 "Blade" star Wesley
- 145 "Cato's to be"
- 146 "Blade" star Wesley
- 147 "Blade" star Wesley
- 148 "Blade" star Wesley
- 149 "Blade" star Wesley
- 150 "Blade" star Wesley
- 151 "Blade" star Wesley
- 152 Feudal peon
- 153 Concept, in Calais
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PUBLISHER'S NOTICE
All real estate advertised in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, sex or national origin," or an intention to make any such preferences, limitation or discrimination. Our readers are informed that all dwellings advertised in this paper are available on an equal opportunity basis. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate or employment which is in violation of the law.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THE ENTERPRISE
VOICE OF THE PEOPLE SINCE 1876 - A PART OF PATRICK COUNTY'S HERITAGE

Wednesday, December 24, 2025 - 11

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

Events

Wednesday, Dec. 24

Unity Baptist Church, 452 Nettle Ridge Loop, Stuart, will have a Christmas Eve Candlelight service on at 11:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 2

The Community Food Pantry will be at the SRRS in Woolwine from 2-4 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 7

The Patrick County Parks and Recreation Department will offer Free Tai Chi Flow classes for seniors. Join us to improve your balance, flexibility and coordination. The 1-hour classes will meet every Wednesday and Thursday in January and February at 3 p.m. in the Hooker Building at Rotary Field in Stuart. For information, email Keith at kskallapost@gmail.com.

Thursday, Jan. 8

The Patrick County Senior Citizens Group will hold its monthly meeting at 11 a.m. in the Hooker Building at Rotary Field in Stuart. Entertainment will be provided by

Junior Cassady and Friends. Beverages will be provided. The menu is potluck, so bring your favorite meats, vegetables, and/or desserts to share.

Friday, Jan. 16

The Community Food Pantry will be at the Fairy Stone VFD from 3-4 p.m.

Ongoing

The Patrick County Parks and Recreation Office are holding sign-ups for grades K-3 basketball season. The deadline is Monday, January 12. Students in grades K-1 and students in grades 2-3 will play on co-ed teams according to the two described grade-level groupings on Saturdays during February and March. Forms are available at any elementary school or the recreation department. Contact the recreation department at 276-694-3917 or recdept@co.patrick.va.us with questions.

The Patrick County Patriots will hold a Turkey Shoot each Saturday in January and the first Saturday February in 2026. Events will be held at the Smith River Wildlife Building. Practice starts at 12:30 p.m. and the shoot starts at 1 p.m. Factory chokes only, no sleeves are allowed.

Inside yard sale to benefit Patrick County Alzheimer's Group LLC. 109 Buena Vista, Stuart, 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.

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

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 9 p.m.

6:30-8 p.m.

Patrick County Veterans Memorial Honor Guard meets on 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 Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.; Appalachian Acoustic Open Jam, every Friday. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for food, with music and dancing, 6:30-9 p.m.; Golden Oldies Open Jam is on the last Tuesday of the month. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for food, music, and dancing from 6:30-9 p.m.

ABSOLUTE REAL ESTATE AUCTION

SAT., JANUARY 10, 2026 - 10:00 AM

BEAUTIFUL FULLY FURNISHED BRICK RANCH HOME ON NICE, LEVEL LOT WITH 2 DET. STORAGE BUILDINGS & VIEW 967 Jeb Stuart Highway. - Meadows of Dan, VA 24120



This brick ranch home features a living room, kitchen/dining combo, 2 bedrooms, full bath and laundry room. Hardwood-carpet & tile throughout, 2 fireplaces, radiant ceiling and baseboard heat, private well and private septic system.

Residence is being sold fully furnished and move in ready! Home sits on a gorgeous, level .65(+) ac. lot with a paved drive, fruit trees, 2 outbuildings and country view.

Great location only minutes from scenic Blue Ridge Parkway!!

Terms: \$4,000 deposit day of auction, balance within 30 days at closing.
Inspection: Call our office anytime to see this beautiful property.

Auctioneer's Note: Great opportunity to purchase a full-time residence or weekend getaway in the mountains, fully furnished and at Absolute Auction!!

Directions: In Hillsdale, Va at int. of Rt. # 58 & Rt. # 221 go E. on Rt. # 58 for 18.5 mi. to prop. on left.

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Honorable Mentions

(cont. from page 6)

I - Icicles
 O - On the Shelf
 N - Nice
 S - Stockings

Christmas Day

By Charli Engle
 BRES

On Christmas day we pray to Jesus and Mother Mary. I pray for everyone each year. After we pray we open presents around the tree. There are a lot of presents for everyone each year. Then we go to my Nana's to eat and open more presents. After that we go to my Grandma's to eat and open even more presents. My Aunt Brandy comes every year and then we open presents from her. We have the best Christmas Day!

Santa

By Landon Charles Frye
 BRES

Hey Santa, I know why we celebrate Christmas, it's because it's Jesus' birthday! Thank you for all the presents but I just want one thing for Christmas this year. I want my dad to stop going to work. I just want to spend time with him! I only see him for two days on the weekends. And one more thing I want for Christmas this year is for my mom. She is the worker of the house and I wish she had a break so we can spend time with her and my day this Christmas! Thank you Santa!

Christmas

By Raegan Hunger
 BRES

Christmas is really fun! I got a Pac Man Machine. I made a Ginger Bread Man for Santa. Putting up decorations are fun, because they are so colorful. The fire is fun for making smores. One time I heard Santa's footsteps! Christmas is the best!

What I Wrote to Santa Last Christmas

By Ashlyn Jones
 BRES

Last Christmas I wrote a letter to Santa and it said, "Thank you Santa for delivering gifts to kids

that behave. Thank you." I left Santa chocolate and a toy. Santa wrote me a note on a piece of paper, "Thank you Ashlyn for the gifts. I left you extra presents." I loved the gifts that Santa left for me. I love Christmas, it is so much fun!

2024 Christmas

By Caleb Lawson
 BRES

On Christmas 2024 we all got bean bags. My brother Dallas got the biggest beanbag but I don't know how that thing fit in his room, it was just crazy! My brother Robert got a pogo stick and I got an easel that took forever for my mom to build. The house was a mess with the wrapping paper. It was like a pool of wrapping paper everywhere. Christmas 2024 was crazy!

Christmas Tree

By Mollie Martin
 BRES

A Christmas tree,
 Oh what it means to me.
 It shines with light,
 How beautiful and bright.
 Ornaments are everywhere,
 Presents under there.
 Up there on the top is the star,
 Which can be seen from far.

Christmas

By Mallory McMillian
 BRES

Christmas time is the best because the Elf on the Shelf is waiting for us to find him. The snow starts falling and covering everything. I like to go sledding in the snow. My favorite thing is opening presents! Christmas is the best!

Santa Claus

By Logan Niten
 BRES

Santa Claus was spotted on a roof top. He got stuck in the chimney. One child saw him and helped him out. Then the child went back to bed and Santa Claus gave him an extra toy for helping him out of the chimney.

Montgomery Barker

BRES

There once was a girl named Jenny. Jenny had a friend named Alfred. Alfred liked Jenny and Jenny liked Alfred. They fell in love and got married on Christmas day. They'd celebrate their anniversary alongside Christmas. They'd bake cookies and eat Oreos with milk and watch Christmas movies. Sadly they had to move but years later new people moved there. They could feel memories in the air. What they called home, others called it memories. Jenny and Alfred died of cancer but people say the house still stands and holds all of the memories once made in that small house.

The One Snowman

By Elias Goins
 BRES

'Twas the night before Christmas all through the house. Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. Santa was here and in the chimney he went. But he noticed something. It was a small snowball. He picked it up and left sixteen presents! He got back to the North Pole. He looked at the snowball got startled! It turned into a snowman! It gave him a small present. It was a rein-dog.

My Favorite Christmas

By Brantley Adkins
 BRES

There was this Christmas that was my favorite. The reason I love this Christmas is because my whole family came. And my dream came true. I finally got an iPhone 15. I was so happy that I almost cried. A few days later my papa gave me twenty-five dollars. Since he missed Christmas because that day he had got back from the hospital from surgery. I was very happy. He took me to the trampoline park! I even got an Icee and I played arcade games, well just a few. When we left I got bubble gum! I even went to get some Mexican and I got ACP and chips, and I even got some Mt. Dew and cheese dip! The end!

(See Entries for Grades 4-7 p. B1)

Lacks

(cont. from page 1)



Doug Perry, of the Smith River District, was honored for his tenure on the Patrick County Board of Supervisors.



County Administrator Michael McGuinness hugged all of the board members after the unanimous vote. He is pictured with Overby and Marshall.



coming fiscal year 2027 budget season in a 4-1 vote. The committee will include the chair and vice chair selected at the January meeting. Steve Marshall, of the Blue Ridge District, cast the dissenting vote.

• Heard an update from Parks and Recreation Director Luke Williams.
 • Allocated \$4,000 per park to cover operating expenses for the remainder of fiscal year 2026 using ARPA funds.
 • Allocated up to \$21,000 to Mountain Top Park for work on its well.
 • Allocated \$1,500 in ARPA funds to I.C. DeHart Park for an electrical project.
 • Allocated \$2,500 in ARPA funds to Dan River Park for awning and window repairs.
 • Denied the Appalachian Power easement as presented by majority vote and asked that alternative easements be brought forward for

consideration.

- Discussed bids for proposed facility card readers. Vice Chair Andrew Overby, of the Dan River District, and Marshall will participate in further discussions.

- Approved codification as presented at the Nov. 17 meeting.

- Appointed an at-large member to the Economic Development Authority.

- Heard an update on the Patrick County Library and Bookmobile from Blue Ridge Regional Library Director Melissa Chapman.

- Approved a letter of commitment for a regional stormwater-sewer vulnerability assessment grant application.

- Heard from Kurt Bozenmayer regarding Doug Perry's tenure on the board. The meeting marked Perry's final meeting as the Smith River District representative. Rick Swink will take

the seat Jan. 1.

- Recognized Perry for his four years of service on the board.

- Approved a proclamation recognizing Lacks as December's Patrick County Partner, in part for her work with Parks and Recreation.

- Approved an amendment to the fiscal year 2026 budget.

- Heard a broadband update from River Street Networks Director of Business Development and Government Affairs Rob Taylor.

- Heard a broadband update from Appalachian Power External Affairs Manager Rob Mann.

- Approved the Nov. 17 meeting minutes.

- Approved bills, claims, and appropriations as amended.

- Heard the county administrator's report.

- Heard supervisors' reports.

Earn N.C. Child Care Credential at Surry



Surry Community College is offering an Introduction to Early Childhood Education course from January 9, 2026 to May 11, 2026. Students can earn the N.C. Child Care Credential through this course. For more information, or to register, contact Kayla Norman, Lead Instructor - Education, at (336) 386-3351 or normanks@surry.edu.

Surry Community College is offering an Introduction to Early Childhood Education, EDU-119, course beginning January 9, 2026, and running through May 11, 2026.

Those who complete EDU-119 with a "C" or better are awarded the N.C. Child Care Credential. Upon completion, students should be able to design a career/professional development plan and appropriate environments, schedules, and activity plans.

This course introduces the foundations of early childhood education, the diverse educational settings for young children, professionalism, and planning intentional developmentally appropriate experiences for each child.

Topics discussed in class include

theoretical foundations, national early learning standards, N.C. Foundations for Early Learning and Development, state regulations, program types, career options, professionalism, ethical conduct, quality inclusive environments, and curriculum responsive to the needs of each child/family.

Tuition is \$76 per credit hour. Spring registration is currently underway. For more information, or to register, contact Kayla Norman, Lead Instructor of Education. For help with college application, class registration, or financial aid, contact Student Services at (336) 386-3264, or studentservices@surry.edu. The deadline to register is January 5, 2026.

Winners of Christmas Bonus announced



Angela Belcher



Christiana Crace



Sandra Perry



Terry Hundley



Melissa Boyer

The winners of the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce's Secret Santa Christmas Bonus were announced recently.

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous patron, the Chamber of Commerce was once again able to host a random drawing, benefiting five lucky Patrick County residents and workers.

This year's winners are Angela Belcher from Panel Processing, Christiana Crace with Blue Ridge Elementary School, Sandra Perry at Patrick County High School, Terry Hundley at Food Country, and Melissa Boyer at Patrick County Sheriff's Office.

"On behalf of the chamber and our lucky winners we would like to say, 'Thank you,' to our sponsor of this program. It brings such cheer and joy not only to the winners, but to the community at large," the chamber stated in a release.

Winners are pictured with Rebecca Adcock, director of the chamber.

Laurel Hill's Many Histories: The Mitchell Family



William A. Mitchell & Lucy C. Taylor

William A. Mitchell purchased 169 acres of the Stuart farm about 1891, which included the site of the old William Letcher home. Much of this property, with its fertile bottomlands, was along the Ararat River. Mitchell, whose family was from Mississippi, was born in 1838, and served in the War between the States. He surrendered with Robert E. Lee at Appomattox as a soldier with the 2nd North Carolina State Troops. When the war ended, William, and a fellow comrade walked back to Mt. Airy, North Carolina. While there, he would first meet his future wife, before heading on to Mississippi. Later, he would travel by train back to Mt. Airy and purchase plug tobacco, wagons and mules and return to his home state and sell the items. While in Mt. Airy, he would stay at the old Blue Ridge Hotel, which was owned by Samuel Hill Taylor. It was said that young Jeb Stuart also spent some time at the hotel. On William's trips, while staying at the hotel, he would continue to court and eventually marry the young lady he met after the war. The young lady was Lucy C. Taylor, (1848-1933) the daughter of the owner of the hotel.

John T. Mitchell & Lillie Smith

Six years where he raised livestock, tobacco and wheat using a three horse team, while Lillie sold milk, butter and eggs. The Mitchell occupation came to an end when John sold the house and 169 acres to Charlie Milton Dellenback in 1949. John Taylor Mitchell died less than a year later in 1950.

William A. Mitchell Family

After the Stuart family sold the Laurel Hill farm in 1859 to Robert R. Galloway and Dr. Joseph Hollingsworth, except for the possibility for a few tenant farmers, the land sat mostly idle for the next twenty years. In 1879, Samuel Hill Taylor, (1820-1892) purchased about half of what was the Stuart home-place. Samuel, a prominent business man from the area, was involved in road construction and the building of hotels in Danbury and Mt. Airy, North Carolina. He also served as clerk of superior court and at one time was sheriff of Surry County. Samuel was married to Eliza Jane Davis (1821-1900). Down through years the Stuart land was broken up and sold, and eventually owned by a number of well known families in the area by the name of Pedigo, Hatcher, Jarrell, Mitchell, Brown and Dellenback.

In 1905, Thomas Brown purchased a portion of the farm, and it was through his son, George E. "Shug" Brown, that the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust was able to acquire seventy-one acres in 1990, which included the site of the Laurel Hill home where James Ewell Brown Stuart was born.

About 1896 William Mitchell built a large two story farmhouse on this site. Local lore believed that the Mitchell family tore down adjacent structures that may have dated to the Stuart or Letcher time and used the lumber in the construction of their home, but evidence at a later date determined that was not the case. The Mitchell family farmed some of the same land that William Letcher and the Stuarts had years earlier. William A. Mitchell died in 1915 and the land came into the possession of his son, John Taylor Mitchell, John, who was born in 1878, married later in life. He worked at a hardware store in Mt. Airy, North Carolina, and also ran the commissary store for a lumber operation in Kibler Valley, Virginia, that was served by the Mt. Airy and Eastern Rail Road, also known as the "Dinky". John married Lillie Smith (1893-1948) about 1918, and continued to farm his part of Laurel Hill for the next thirty years.

Samuel Hill Taylor & Eliza Jane Davis

1932

By Tom Perry

In the early days of the twentieth century, young George Elbert "Shug" Brown made his way to school along the old farm road that still exists today, running from the Ararat Highway across the Ararat River and up Rabbit Ridge to the J. E. B. Stuart School. Brown saw two aging veterans of the War Between the States sitting on the porch of a large white frame home in the bottomlands once owned by the Stuarts. They were trading tales of their experiences of The War Between The States within sight of William Letcher's grave.

Albert Harvey Jarrell (1835-1923) was born in Rockingham County, North Carolina, and enlisted in Company A, 2nd North Carolina State Troops in Wake County on September 5, 1862. After being captured on May 3, 1863, he was exchanged ten days later, only to be captured again on November 7, 1863, near Kelly's Ford, Virginia. He spent several months in prison at Point Lookout, Maryland, before

being exchanged in February 1865. He married Jane Tickle and lived along the Ararat River on land previously owned by Archibald Stuart. Many of his descendants still live in the area, including world-famous Bluegrass musician Tommy Jarrell and his great-grandson, Dr. Eric Jarrell, who was educated at the University of Virginia.

The owner of the house was his neighbor, William Alvis Mitchell (1838-1915), who hailed from Mississippi, lost two fingers in the War, but found himself in Company A, 2nd North Carolina State Troops at Appomattox in April 1865 when Robert E. Lee surrendered to U.S. Grant. His copy of Lee's General Order #9 was a treasured possession of his grandson, William Taylor Mitchell (1920-2011), and his wife, Maydee Ellen Watson Mitchell (1926-1998). Their two children, Melissa, who married Wesley Collins and then Mike Straka, and Alan Taylor Mitchell, who married Linda Gammons, gave William and Maydee four grandchildren: Chris

Collins, Amy Manuel, Kevin, and Randall Mitchell.

After the Stuarts sold the Laurel Hill Farm in 1859 to Robert R. Galloway and Dr. Joseph Hollingsworth, except for the possibility of a few tenant farmers, the land mainly sat idle for the next twenty years. In 1879, Samuel Hill Taylor (1820-1892) purchased about half of what was the Stuart homeplace. Samuel, a prominent businessman from the area, was involved in road construction and hotel development in Danbury and Mount Airy, North Carolina. He also served as a clerk of the superior court and, at one time, was sheriff of Surry County. Samuel was married to Eliza Jane Davis (1821-1900). Down through the years, the Stuart land was broken up and sold, and eventually owned by several well-known families in the area, including Pedigo, Hatcher, Jarrell, Brown, Dellenback, and Mitchell.

In 1905, Thomas Brown purchased a portion of the farm, and it was through his son, George E.

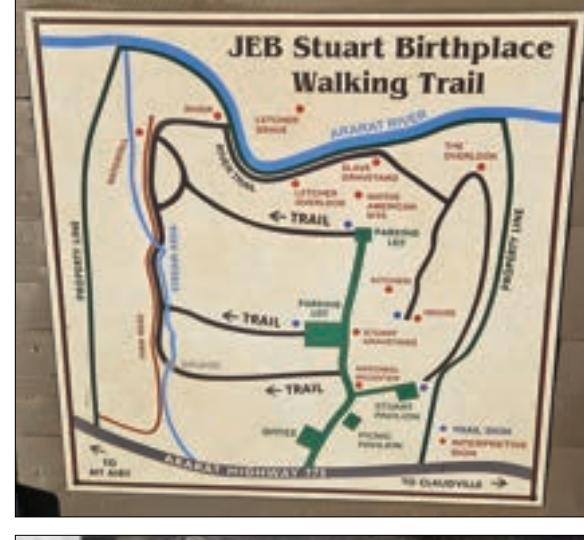
"Shug" Brown, that the J. E. B. Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust was able to acquire seventy-one acres in 1990, which included the site of the Laurel Hill home where James Ewell Brown Stuart was born.

William Aaron Mitchell (1838-1915) purchased 169 acres of the Stuart farm about 1891, which included the site of the old William Letcher home. Much of this property, with its fertile bottomlands, was along the Ararat River. Mitchell, who was from Mississippi, was born in 1838 and served in the War Between the States. He surrendered with Robert E. Lee at Appomattox as a soldier with the 2nd North Carolina State Troops. When the War ended, William and a comrade walked back to Mississippi. Later, he would travel by train back to Mount Airy, purchase plug tobacco, wagons, and mules, and return to his home state to sell the items. While in Mount Airy, they stayed at the old Blue Ridge Hotel, which

(See Laurel p. 14)

Laurel

(cont. from page 13)



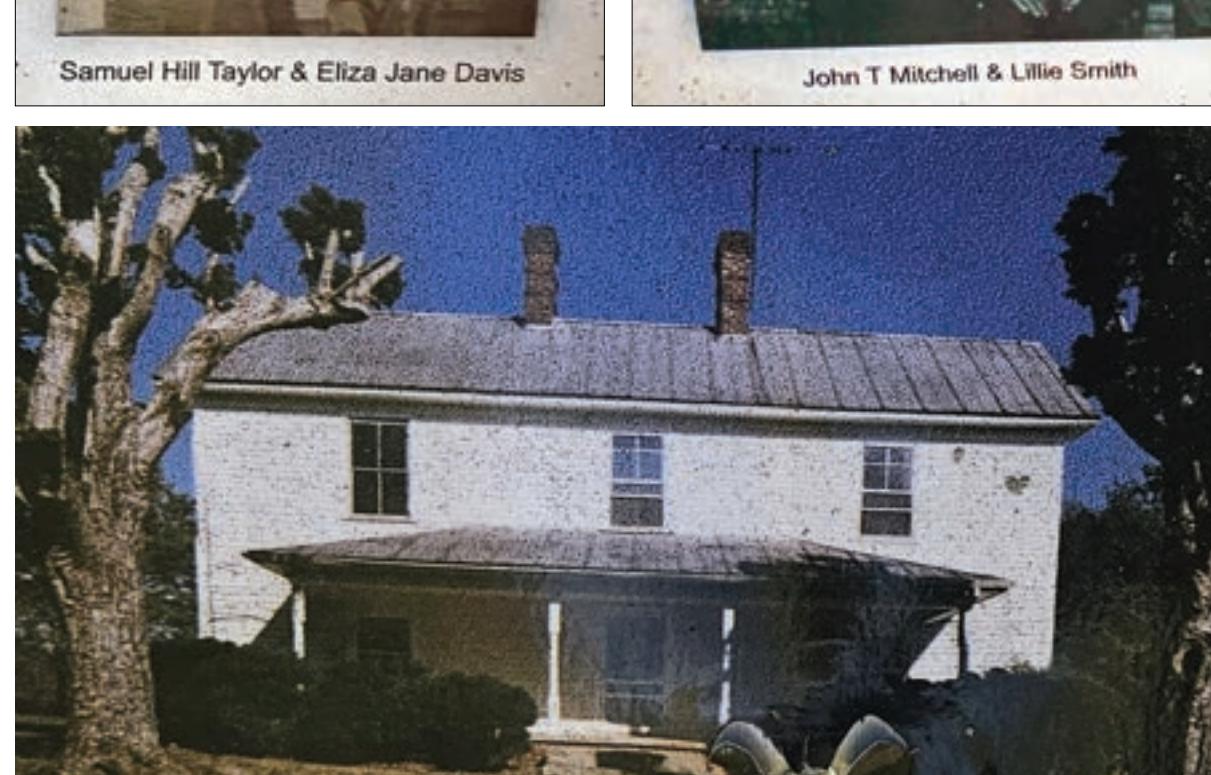
William A. Mitchell & Lucy C. Taylor



Samuel Hill Taylor & Eliza Jane Davis



John T. Mitchell & Lillie Smith



Samuel Hill Taylor owned it. It was said that young J. E. B. Stuart also stayed at the hotel. While staying at the hotel during his trip, Williams would continue to court and eventually marry the young lady he met after the War. The young lady was Lucy C. Taylor (1848-1933), the daughter of Samuel Taylor.

About 1896, William Mitchell built a large two story farmhouse on the site. Local lore held that the Mitchell Family tore down adjacent structures that may have dated to the Stuart or Letcher era and used the lumber to construct their home, but later evidence showed that was not the case. The Mitchell Family farmed some of the same land that William Letcher and the Stuarts had years earlier. William A. Mitchell died in 1915, and the land passed to his son, John Taylor Mitchell (1878-1950). He worked at a hardware store in Mount Airy and also ran the commissary store for the Kibler and Kay lumber operation in Kibler Valley, which served the Mount Airy and Eastern Railroad, known as "The Dinky." John married Lillie Smith (1893-1946) about 1918, and continued to farm his part of Laurel Hill for the next thirty-five years, where he raised livestock, tobacco, and wheat

using a three horse team, while Lillie sold milk, butter, and eggs. John and Lillie Mitchell had two children, the above mentioned William and Evelyn, born in 1926, who married Ed Richardson and had two children, John and Kitty.

The Mitchells' time at Laurel Hill ended when

John sold the 169-acre house to Charlie Dellenback in 1949. The Dellenback Family will be the

subject of the next article in this series.

The William Letcher site is part of five acres

on the Laurel Hill Farm owned by the J. E. B.

Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust, Inc. It

includes the site of the Mitchell-Dellenback

House, which is located on the south side of the

Ararat River.

Tom Perry can be reached at freestateofpatrick@yahoo.com and the J. E. B. Stuart Birthplace's website is www.jebstuart.org.

range of eligible activities, including dam repair and upgrades, hazard mitigation efforts and engineering studies.

"Protecting Virginians from dam

failures and flooding is one of our

most important responsibilities,"

said Acting DCR Director Andrew

Smith. "These grants help com-

munities strengthen critical infra-

structure, address known risks and

build a safer future."

Dam owners in Virginia are re-

sponsible for the safe operation and

maintenance of their dams. In the

event of a failure, dam owners are

responsible for any downstream

damage.

"Many dams across Virginia were

built decades ago and require mod-

ernization to meet current safety

standards," said DCR Chief Dam

Safety Engineer Andrea Henry.

"Through this grant program, we're

ensuring that owners and localities

have access to the resources needed

to safeguard lives and property."

All grants are reimbursements

and require between a 10-30%

match. The maximum amount per

grant will be determined based on

amounts requested for eligible proj-

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Requests must be submitted by 4

p.m., March 31, 2026.

Grants are offered to local gov-

ernment or privately owned dams

across two project type categories:

Type 1 projects

Up to \$1 million is available for

initial engineering studies for dams.

Type 2 projects:

Up to \$4 million is available for

final plans and construction.

Go to www.dcr.virginia.gov/dam-safety-and-floodplains/dam-safety-funding to download the grant

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Season's Greetings 2025

Young voices shine in annual creative writing contest

Local students put their imaginations to work for the annual Creative Writing Contest sponsored by The Enterprise. From short stories to poems, entries from area schools showcased humor, creativity, and insight, giving judges a glimpse into the vibrant ideas flourishing in classrooms across the community.

We appreciate every entry. Each one made us smile, and we hope you enjoy them as much as we do. Below, you'll find the honorable mentions from this year's contest, highlighting the imagination and talent of local students.

The participating local schools and corresponding abbreviations are:

- Blue Ridge Elementary School (BRES)
- Meadows of Dan Elementary School (MODE)
- Woolwine Elementary School (WES)
- Patrick County High School (PCHS)

Fourth through Seventh Grade Entries

Fourth Grade

Living Christmas Presents!

By Harper Shelton

WES

Hi! I am Holly. It is finally Christmas Eve night in Ireland. I am an only child; my parents are Thomas and Grace. I sneak to the tree, just to see if Santa had visited, and I see my presents. I see a new trampoline, hippo stuffie, Unplugged book, and lastly an iPad. But, something was weird, the presents were...moving! I started feeling a little scared, so I yelled "Mom and Dad come here." So, they came downstairs and asked "What's wrong?" "Do you see that?" I replied. My parents tucked me back into bed, with a kiss on the forehead and "Good Night." I lay there wondering if my parents were blind or if I was dreaming. But you know, after this, I can't sleep.

One could say, I am feeling mischievous, or maybe just curious. So, I went back downstairs and I saw my presents; they were drinking hot chocolate. I was feeling brave, so I crawled under the tree and imagined I was one of those spy kids. I got to see the presents eating candy canes, and putting together some brand new gingerbread houses that we purchased earlier that day from a local store. I also watched them making our new ornament kits.

Feeling brave, I rolled into the kitchen, behind the counter while whispering Christmas song lyrics. But, I rolled right into two elves, who were just having a good time. I tried to scurry, but, THEY SAW

ME! I tried to act normal, but what came out of my mouth was, "What's up, party people?" I was soooooo embarrassed. But why, my presents seem to be LIVING. My hippo stuffie even asked if I was the pizza guy. I told them "I am the child that lives here." We laughed and giggled and played for a bit. I was no longer scared, but still thought it was weird.

We must have played most of the night, because I could hear footsteps. I knew my parents would be coming down soon to make their morning coffee. I tiptoed up the stairs and crawled into bed, pretending to be asleep. I realized my parents were just checking on me as they went to the restroom. So, I quietly returned downstairs. I didn't see my gifts at all, it was almost like they had disappeared!

I started to get stressed while searching, evidently they were outside and returned through the kitchen door. We continued having fun together until I could hear my parents moving upstairs. This time they would be coming down for their coffee. I said, "Shhhhhh" they're coming. The gifts looked at each other and then at me and the trampoline said "Who are they?" Evidently, parents are people they have never heard of. But, they all went back under the tree. I quietly, but quickly ran upstairs and pretended to be asleep again, so our family could come downstairs together for Christmas morning!

Christmas morning, everything seemed normal, except, I was super tired! My presents were wrapped, but they were the same living presents I

had played with the night before. It was the most magical Christmas ever!

Santa and the Missing Girl

By Tanner Whitt

MODE

Santa and the Elf realized it was morning so they couldn't fly back to town to give the missing girl her present. When they arrived at the house, they looked in the bed and she wasn't there. The Elf said, "I guess we'll have to wait until night to come back but then it won't be Christmas." Santa realized his sleigh could help give out presents quicker because it was a time machine. He and the Elf hopped back into the sleigh. They traveled back in time to when they were giving presents to the other kids. They then realized that traveling way too far back in time wasn't such a good idea. So, they had to do presents over again. Santa said, "Aw shucks! I don't want to start Christmas all over again." He and the Elf jumped into the sleigh and traveled forward in time until they got it right. He wasn't about to not give the missing girl her present. Afterwards, they went back to the North pole. Santa said, "I can finally relax!" The unknown girl said, "Santa?" as she was climbing out of the sleigh. Santa was shocked because the missing girl had been in the sleigh the whole time sleeping and they didn't even know it. All Santa could say was "Uh-oh!!" and gave her the biggest hug ever.

thing. "You can do it sweetheart," she assured him, but it never worked. He tried and tried to be normal. He tried to sit still in class, but he couldn't. He even tried to color in the lines during free time, but he still couldn't.

It was Christmas Eve, and the kids were getting ready to go to bed. They were putting on their pajamas and brushing their teeth. Adam did too, hoping he could sleep so Santa could come. He stayed up until 11:30 PM. He rolled over, shifted to his left side, then to his right side, and even repositioned his pillow, but still couldn't sleep. He thought about what his mom said. The words "You can do it sweetheart," echoed in his mind. Finally, he rolled over towards the window, wished upon a star, and went to sleep. He woke up just as everyone else, on Christmas morning. As everyone else rushed down the stairs, excited to open their gifts, Adam only walked sluggishly.

As everyone passed around presents, Adam was last. He opened the only present that was left for him, and unwrapped it carefully. Inside there was a bell. Just a "normal" bell. He rang it but no one could hear it. "Awe, it must be broken," his mom said. Adam was confused. "What do you mean?" he asked. "I can hear it, can't you?" but no one could. Adam didn't care; he loved his bell. He later learned that every time he rang the bell, he could focus and sit still. He used the bell every day. Unknowingly, his mother said "I always knew you could do it." Little did both of them know they couldn't do it without Santa.

the most important thing at Christmas. Even though he had been offered another family, he knew that he already had the best family in the world!

A Mouse's First Christmas

By Skylar LeBlond

WES

One Christmas Eve night there was a little mouse that was sleeping by the Christmas tree to the sound of Christmas carols. Around midnight there was a sound that woke the mouse. The sound was loud, but cheerful.

"Ho, Ho, Ho!"

The mouse was confused; he had never heard a sound like that, but he had just been born that year. The mouse got up and looked around. Then he saw it!

A man in red had come down the chimney! The mouse was scared. He thought someone had broken into the house! Then the man in red came into full view, he was in the living room and the mouse could see him clearly. The man had a big fluffy white beard, dark brown eyes, and a bag full of gifts.

"Santa!"

"Hello there, little mouse, I heard this is your first Christmas," Santa said with joy.

The mouse nodded. "Yes! This is my very first Christmas!" The mouse was very excited.

Santa began going through his bag of gifts as if looking for something. "Ah, yes, here we go." Santa took out a small wrapped gift and said, "Your present." Santa put the small gift next to the mouse. "Make sure you don't open this until morning."

The mouse nodded. "Okay, Santa!"

Santa waved to the mouse. "Goodbye, little mouse, see you next year." Santa went up the chimney, and the mouse went back to where he was sleeping. Just as the mouse was going back to sleep he heard something off in the distance.

"Merry Christmas and a happy new year!" and then the mouse happily went back to sleep.

The next morning the mouse woke up to the sound of children running downstairs. The mouse got up

(See Mouse p. 2)

Bobby The Snowman

By Lettie Moricle

WES

Once upon a time, there was a really big blizzard and people could not get out of their homes. It was like.... maybe an avalanche? All the people were in their houses except Bobby. Bobby had gotten stuck in the snow. At first, he screamed for help, but then he knew that no one could hear him. I mean the people were in their houses. After he screamed for help his

throat started itching and hurting. Then he thought to himself, "Maybe I can eat some snow, I mean it is edible." So he ate snow until he couldn't eat anymore. So that became Bobby's daily diet, well, at least before the snow melted.

He kept eating and eating it every day wondering when the snow would melt. Then he started feeling weird because he was eating so much snow, but he didn't think it would make him feel funny. He went to sleep and had this weird dream about turning into a snowman. He didn't think it meant anything, but when he woke up he didn't feel weird anymore. He thought it was just normal to feel fine after not feeling well, but then he noticed that for some reason he couldn't move. He didn't know why, but he thought it was because he had on 6 layers of jackets, a long sleeve shirt, two pairs of sweatpants, and a beanie. He barely could remember anything that happened before the blizzard.

Then he looked down at his feet and saw snow. He tried to wipe it off but more snow just piled on. He was super confused! Then he rubbed his face because it was very cold. He looked down at his hands and they had become sticks! Then he touched his nose and it was a carrot! "Oh, no! Oh, no, I'm a snowman!" But then he thought it was really cool because he didn't get cold.

Suddenly all the snow just disappeared. He tried to move again and he still couldn't. Then he noticed a snowgirl and everything just went silent, and she winked and said, "It's really not that bad to be a snowman or girl! All you have to do is get used to it!" "But... but what about my family?" Bobby asked. "Well, I'm really sorry to say that ever since you became a snowman, they just forgot about you," replied the snowgirl. "Oh!" Bobby said. "So they don't know who I am now?" "No, they don't remember you, but you have a snow family and we are the most loyal family!" said the snowgirl. "Really? I already have a loyal family and I miss them very much. I want to be with my own family for Christmas."

Suddenly the sun came out very brightly and melted him. He had said the magic words of family being

Mouse

(cont. from page 1)

and went over to where his present was and immediately ripped open the gift and saw what it was. The mouse gasped! "A toy train!!! It's just what I wanted!" The mouse played with the toy train all day.

Later that night the mouse looked out the window. He spoke to himself. "I wonder what Christmas will be like next year?" The mouse fell asleep and dreamed of the Christmases to come.

The Case of the Missing Cookies

By Charlee Shuff

WES

It's not a federal law, but stealing cookies should be a felony- especially if it's Santa's cookies.

One Christmas Eve, Noel was setting up the traditional cookies and milk. She was stacking the cookies very strategically on a plate and pouring the milk into a glass at a certain angle so it didn't spill.

Being very curious, Noel's dog, Rudolph, shuffled through the kitchen to find out what she was doing. Knowing that Rudolph loved cookies, Noel pushed him away before he could get into any mischief.

She finished setting up the surprise for Santa right before her mom said, "Time for bed!" Noel sprinted to her bed and crawled under the covers. Just like every other kid on Christmas Eve, she was too ecstatic to even try to fall asleep. Surprisingly, once she closed her eyes she dozed off within a matter of minutes with Rudolph snuggled peacefully at her feet.

Bang! Suddenly Noel and Rudolph awoke from their peaceful sleep. Rudolph hopped out of the bed swiftly, and Noel followed behind. Once they got to the kitchen Noel realized all of the cookies were gone, but the presents still had not arrived from Santa's sleigh!

"Someone ate Santa's cookies!" Noel exclaimed. "There's a thief walking around munching on Santa's cookies and Rudolph and I are going to catch the culprit!"

First, they scrambled around the house searching for clues. They looked up and down, left to right, but still found absolutely nothing. They were getting very frustrated until Rudolph found a clue!

He found a jingle bell on the kitchen floor. Rudolph brought the jingle bell over to Noel. "Finally, a clue!" Noel shouted. She thought to herself about how a jingle bell would randomly get there. "An elf! Only an elf would accidentally leave a jingle bell! Where would we find an elf? The North Pole!" Noel shouted. Rudolph barked in agreement.

She put on her winter coat and Rudolph's leash on his collar. It was bitterly cold outside, but they were determined to catch the culprit.

They had no idea where to go. Suddenly Rudolph started glowing! "Rudolph, what's happening?" Noel exclaimed. All of a sudden, Rudolph turned into Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer! "Wow!" Noel shrieked. She hopped on Rudolph's back expecting him to just trot all the way to the North Pole, but to her surprise, Rudolph's hooves lifted off the ground and they took off on a journey to the North Pole. It took a very long time, but they managed to make it to the North Pole without any complications- well, that is, other than a little frostbite.

Noel hopped off Rudolph's back and started looking around to see where they could find the guilty elf. No one was even around. Then Noel realized that it was almost time for Santa to be leaving with his reindeer to deliver presents all around the world.

"We need to sneak into Santa's workshop." Noel explained. "The only question is: How?"

So Noel and Rudolph softly walked their way to the workshop while trying not to get caught. They made it to one side of the workshop where they found a reindeer door. Through the door, they saw an elf dressed in all black. This looked very suspicious since elves usually wore vibrant Christmas colors. Noel noticed something interesting. When the elf turned around, he was eating something. She realized what had just happened right before her eyes! They had just found the culprit!

"Aha!" Noel screeched. Abruptly, the elf darted off! Without hesitating, Noel scurried off to catch the elf with Rudolph behind her. Candy canes were flying everywhere! Red and green ribbons that were hanging up were now on the ground! They made a complete circle around the workshop and landed in the same room from where they started the chase. They were all so out of breath, but Noel took this situation as an opportunity.

"Why did you steal the cookies we had out for Santa?" Noel asked.

"Well, I have always been jealous of the attention Santa gets, so I wanted to live a little bit of the

dream." explained the elf.

"Oh, I didn't know someone would feel that way, but I understand," Noel said. "Let's make a deal. If you stop stealing people's cookies, I will lay out a separate plate of cookies for you every year. Does that sound like a deal?" Noel asked.

"Sure!" agreed the elf. Then, Noel hopped on Rudolph's back and they went home.

"Good morning," Noel's mom whispered. Noel woke up and realized it was all a dream. Regardless, Noel decided to put out an extra plate of cookies every year- just in case.

Christmas for the Animals

By Emmalyn Hubbard

WES

Once upon a time, there were people throwing a Christmas party. They had a little girl named Madison. Through her window she watched her puppies play in the snow. She started to think about why animals don't have Christmas too? She ran to the kitchen where her mom was making Christmas cookies for the Christmas party planned for later that same day. Madison asked her mom why the animals didn't have Christmas like we do. Her mom didn't know how to answer her, so she sent Madison to her dad. She asked her dad the same question. He had no idea either, so he said, "I don't know darling." She was disappointed in her parents which made her sad.

Madison ran back to her mom and asked if she would ask the people who had animals to bring their animals with them to the party. Her mom said, "Yes, but just let me finish the cookies first." Madison said thank you to her mom. She ran to her room without telling her mother why she wanted the pets to be invited.

Madison started to plan her pet Christmas party. She needed to ask her mom to take her to the store to get some things for the party. She planned everything out perfectly. She would bring the pets to her room and give them treats. Suddenly she realized she didn't have a Christmas tree in her room. She asked her dad to take her to the Christmas tree farm to chop down a small tree for her room. Her dad agreed and they headed to the Christmas tree farm. When they got there Madison spotted the perfect tree. It was the perfect size and color, and it had the perfect branches. She ran to the tree and said "I want this one, please!" Her dad cut the tree down and put it on the truck. She was so happy about the tree and the plan.

When they got home her mom said she told the people to bring their pets to the party. Madison had almost forgotten to ask her mom to take her to the store to get the pet party things. She asked her mom if they could go and her mom said that they could. When they got there Madison went straight to the pet aisle and found what she needed. They returned home and her mom said that the guests would be there soon, so Madison began setting up everything. She had to hurry, so she could meet her pet guests and take them to her room for the pet Christmas party.

The guests arrived with their pets and Madison took the animals to her room and gave them the food she had planned for the party. The animals had their meal and then it was time to play. She gave them toys for their presents. They played for about an hour and then went to their owners with their toys in their mouths. It was time for them to leave.

Madison thanked her mom and dad. She asked them if she could have a pet Christmas party again next year, and they said that she could. After all, don't you think that pets should enjoy Christmas, too?

A Christmas Mystery

By Monce Ortega

WES

We were getting ready to go outside. It's Christmas Eve and it looked like a winter wonderland outside. This was the first time it had snowed like this in years. My sister and I were really excited. When we stepped into the snow the snow was almost up to our waist! It was really hard to walk, but we were able to climb up on a big hill that was perfect for sledding down. We knew we were going to have the time of our lives!

First we had a competition on who could build the better snowman. We went all out. I found different types of hats to put on my snowman while she found some funny sunglasses to put on hers. We had to judge ourselves and we decided that her snowman was better. Then it was time for igloos. It was kind of hard to make them stand, but I had a strategy. My

strategy was to build blocks instead of just piling up snow. Thanks to my strategy, I won.

Next was a snowball fight. Surprisingly we both threw pretty hard and it wasn't that difficult to form the snow into balls. The rule was that the first one to hit the other one ten times won. We were in the middle of the fight when my sister hit what we thought was a rock. The "rock" stood up! It was not that tall, but not that short either. It seemed kind of furry and it didn't move. It just stood there. We both froze, looked at each other, and started running for our lives.

Once we got home we locked all the doors. Our mom asked us what was going on and we explained to her what we had seen. We all looked out the window, but there was nothing there, so she thought we were imagining things. Although we were both scared, we knew we had to catch it or at least figure out what it was.

The next day we went out again, but instead of playing we were setting up a trap to catch this monster. When we got back inside we took turns sitting by the window and watching the trap. We waited all day and nothing happened, but on the second day, it was different. I was on duty and was about to fall asleep when I heard the bell we had installed in case one of us fell asleep. So I ran outside to the trap. At first I was scared, but I worked up my courage and slowly opened the trap. I saw it! My sister joined me and she was as surprised as I was!

It was a dog, not old, but not young either. It was the cutest thing I had ever seen. It was black and white and its eyes were blue. Surprisingly, it wasn't scared of me. It even came up to me, so I picked it up and carried it back to our house. We groomed it, fed it, and gave it a shower. After a lot of begging and pleading, we convinced our parents to let us keep it. Safe to say, this was the best Christmas present ever!

Working At The North Pole

By Molly Frable

WES

It was early on a winter morning and the snow was falling from the sky. I live in the snow and so did my family. During a tense snowball fight they got knocked over! If you couldn't already guess I'm a snowman! My name is Casper. I don't know why I'm named that, but I suppose a little kid named Caleb named me, and technically made me. Anyways, it's almost Christmas, so all snowmen will be called to the North Pole. Now you may be asking why snowmen are going to the North Pole. Well, we snowmen have to help make the toys. Yes, it's not just the elves. Honestly, we snowmen do not get enough credit.

Tonight is the night! I can already feel the Christmas spirit as I gaze up at the sky. Then suddenly it happens! I'm teleported to the North Pole. Almost immediately elves, snowmen, and reindeer are getting rushed around in all different directions. Soon after I register everything, Santa appears on top of a tree which is very exciting for me since I'm a big fan. Cheers roar and then a hush falls upon the crowd as we all look up at Santa as he speaks. "Let's all make this a merry Christmas!" he shouts, and the crowd erupts in agreement and cheers.

After his brief speech I hurried inside the toy factory to begin making toys. An elf starts shouting orders, so bossy those elves, but nonetheless, I begin making dolls, dinosaurs, trains, and whatever else is highest in demand this Christmas. I make toys until I run out of supplies. Then I have to ask those bossy elves for help. I hop on the stage to ask the elf in charge for more supplies. The elf clicks his tongue in annoyance, even though the other elves have run out before me! "You snowmen are so wasteful with supplies," the elf complains. I can't control the amount of supplies I was given!

After I finish all the gifts I needed to make, I begin helping with the reindeer. If you ask me, they are gross, but I'm stuck washing them! I have to admit though, some of them are indeed cute. I look around and it's just me! No one else has finished making gifts yet, and there are SO many reindeer to wash! Santa really needs to start paying me for this. After what feels like hours I finally finish washing them with zero help.

Finally, it's Christmas Eve. Santa is gone delivering gifts, snowmen are packing up, and elves are drinking hot chocolate. In a shockingly short time, Santa arrives back. Now, usually the snowmen go back to wherever they were made, and they all did, but not me. I look around confused. Suddenly Santa lands in front of me. "You have real spirit, Casper!"

(See Working p.4)



December is the time for remembering the past & reaching toward the future.
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

As we remember the great events & programming we hosted in 2025, we are excited to continue to grow & expand those offerings in 2026.

Patrick County CHAMBER of COMMERCE

FROM THE STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS OF THE PATRICK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, WE WISH EVERYONE A HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND MAY OUR COMMUNITY CONTINUE TO GROW IN THE COMING YEAR!

JESUS
IS THE
REASON
FOR THE
SEASON

*Merry Christmas
to one and all!*

*Thank you for
your patronage
during the
past year!*

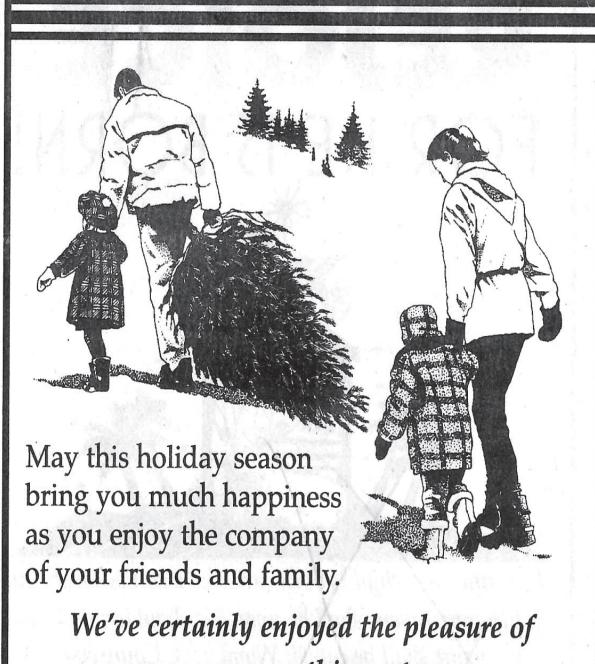
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Happy New Year
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Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
good will toward men. Luke 2:14

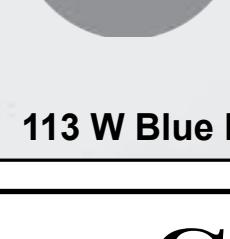


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From Our Family to Yours

Wishing you infinite moments of
joy and connection throughout
this special season.

Thanks for bringing so much joy and
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We look forward to seeing you again soon in the new year!

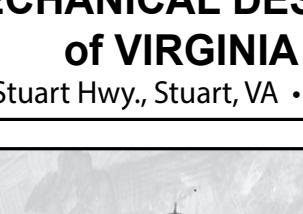


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*"For the Lord Most High is to be feared, A great King over all the earth."
Psalms 47:2*



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spend with us, and we thank you for your support
throughout the year.



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Working

(cont. from page 2)

I want you to stay. Do you accept this invitation?" I nod vigorously. So I drink cold chocolate everyday.... until next Christmas.

The Best Christmas Ever

By Raina Newsome

WES

Once upon a time, there was a little girl named Lilly and she loved Christmas. Lilly loved decorating her house with Christmas lights and other Christmas decorations. She had always celebrated Christmas with her dad, but four months ago he passed away with cancer. So she was not feeling the Christmas spirit this year. While Lilly is going through this hard time, her mom has to go on a business trip and Lilly is going to miss Christmas with her.

Seventh Grade

By James Pombo

HRMS

As the snow-white minivan pulled up the driveway, Aunt Ellie ran out of the house. She was excited to see her nephew and her niece. Henry and Lily ran out of the car to hug Aunt Ellie, while Thomas was getting their bags. He was grateful for his sister's invitation, but Christmas had become just a checklist to him: Gifts Bought, Money Spent, Energy Gone. He couldn't quite express joy for Christmas the way his kids could anymore. All he wanted to do was go to sleep and make Christmas pass quickly. Aunt Ellie's house was a farmhouse. It was bigger than most because it had three floors. The living room, kitchen, and dining room were on the first floor, the bedrooms were on the second floor, and the writing room was on the third floor. Aunt Ellie was a good writer, with more than five books released. She invited the family over every Christmas, but this was the first Christmas that they could celebrate together. They went inside and found the tree all lit up.

"The same tree that mom and dad used to have," Aunt Ellie said, handing Thomas a cup of spiced cider.

Later that evening, everyone was asleep except Thomas. As he roamed the halls, he stopped, staring at the same old Christmas tree, the one that he always found presents waiting for him. He never received presents anymore. He gave presents to his kids but never got any back.

The next morning on Christmas Day, Thomas woke up to the sound of kids running, coffee brewing, and bacon sizzling. As he got up from his bed, his kids swung open the door and jumped on his bed.

"WAKE UP!" the kids yelled, "IT'S CHRISTMAS!"

"Fine, fine. Go down to your aunt, I'll be there soon," Thomas said to them.

The children ran down, ready to open their presents. Thomas slowly got up, got dressed, and came downstairs as he promised. Ellie was there, coffee in hand, offering a cup to him.

"How many times have they asked to open the presents?" Thomas asked while grabbing the cup, "400?"

Ellie chuckled. They all sat down on the couch, Ellie and Thomas watched Henry and Lily.

"Ok, time to open presents," Thomas said, watching the smiles on their faces and smiling himself.

After everyone opened their presents, there was one left. The tag wasn't Ellie, not Henry, and not Lily, but Thomas. Thomas slowly opened the gift and inside was a cute little snow globe. The snow globe contained statues of everyone: Lily, Henry, Aunt Ellie, and even Thomas. Thomas was so happy that he leaped up and jumped around, but it wasn't the snow globe that made him so happy, it was the warm feeling that people cared. Some people would call it Christmas Spirit, but I would call it Family and Love, because no one can be happy without family, friends, or love.

Time for Christmas

By Natalie Worley

WES

It's time for Christmas, laughter in the air,
Time for love and kindness everywhere.
It's time for sledding and time for snow,
Time for Santa to say, "Ho, Ho, Ho!"
It's time for twinkling lights shining high,
Time for snowflakes falling from the sky.
It's time for baking cookies that are so sweet,
Time for all our favorite things to eat.

It's time for gifts and Christmas cheer,
Time for the best time of the year!

The Mission

By Scarlett Greer

WES

One snowy evening, Rudolph decided to leave the North Pole on a mission. He made sure Santa knew he left, so he had written a note. "Santa, I am leaving the North Pole on a mission."

Rudolph was not sure where to go first. He came across a little drummer boy. Rudolph said, "Hi! What is your name, little guy?" The drummer boy, in a daze, was silent for a moment. Then again, Rudolph asked, "Hello? What is your name?" The little boy responded now, saying, "Oh! sorry, my name is Liam but most call me Li for short. What's your name?" "My name is Rudolph and my nose glows, so be warned in case I accidentally scare you." "Ok," Liam replied. Rudolph suggested, "Hey, want to come with me on my mission for Santa?" "Sure," Liam said. So Liam and Rudolph decided to head South. They showed up in a town with people, streets, and shops. Nearby, they saw a snowman. Wanting a closer look, they went up to it, and touched its arm. Suddenly, the snowman came to life! "Merry Christmas!" the snowman said. "Who are you?" Rudolph and Liam spoke at the same time. "Me?" the snowman asked. "Yes, you," Liam replied. "I am Frosty The Snowman! And if I may ask, who are you?" "I am Rudolph and this is my friend Liam. We are on a mission for Santa! Want to tag along?" "Of, course!" the snowman answered.

They finally arrived at their mission destination, The Ice Castle. They knocked on the door and a little penguin showed up. The penguin asked them, "What brought you here?" "We are here to see the Ice King,"

So Lilly has to spend Christmas with her grandparents that live in Maine. Lilly lives in California so she has to fly there. She does not see them much and she does not know how much they love Christmas. There are Christmas lights all around the house and tinsel around the porch railing. There are Christmas pillows on the rocking chair and lots more decorations. Lilly gets out of the car with her mom and walks up to the porch. Her grandparents greet them with four cups of hot chocolate. They all talk for a while but the only thing that Lilly can think about is not spending Christmas with her dad. Eventually, her mom says, "I have to go and get on the flight for my trip." Then she turns to Lilly and says, "I will be back in two weeks. Try to have fun." Then she gives Lilly a big hug, gets back in her car and drives away.

Lilly's grandma says, "It's cold out here, so let's go inside." Lilly thought there were a lot of Christmas decorations outside, but, oh, when she went inside she was so surprised. There was a massive Christmas tree, tons of other Christmas decorations, and gifts everywhere. Lilly happens to notice that the Christmas tree does not have any lights or ornaments on it. Her grandpa says, "We waited for you to decorate it." Lilly was so happy to decorate the Christmas tree!

Before she knew it a week had gone by and Lilly was having so much fun drinking hot chocolate, making Christmas cookies, and telling stories by the fire. Lilly wakes up the next morning and realizes that it is Christmas Day. She runs out into the living room and sees lots of presents under the tree. Lilly's grandparents had given her the best Christmas ever!

Rudolph replied. The penguin let them in and took them to the Ice King who was sitting on his throne. "Who sent you?" the Ice King asked. "Santa sent us to ask for your help!" replied Liam. "What exactly does he need help with?" inquired the King. "There is a big ice storm coming! He needs your help in building a wall around the North Pole," Rudolph explained. "Yes! I'll do it," the King agreed.

He summoned his millions of henchmen penguins and they all headed to Santa's home. Once they arrived at the North Pole, they drank hot cocoa and spent two hours figuring out how to build the wall. They finished the construction of the wall right before midnight. The storm started 30 minutes later. They all spent the night at Santa's home because they were scared of the big storm. All of them went to bed in their cozy pajamas and slept tight with no bed bugs to bite. This just goes to show you that people who work together can really make a difference!

Christmas Night

By Aubree Bowman

WES

Look at the Christmas lights
while getting the cookies ready for the night.
Don't forget the carrots
for the baby reindeer and their parents.
Watch the snow fall off the roof
before Santa Clause gets to you.
Go fast to sleep without a peep
while the reindeer come right down your street.
While you are sleeping in bed
Santa Clause and his reindeer deer are flying
above your head.

My Christmas

By Cassidy Urbach

WES

On Christmas Eve my family and I have a lot to do. The whole day we are all wrapping presents and making food. My mom always cooks dinner for us while my dad and I wrap presents. It's really hard to wrap presents when there are two dogs in the way! Having to hide presents is also very difficult. One time last year I was wrapping my mom's present and she walked in with a big box and told me to wrap it for my dad. I had to shove all of her presents under my bed as fast as I could so she wouldn't see, because her presents were not completely wrapped.

This day normally goes by very slowly because I just want it to be Christmas so badly, and all I do is think about Christmas and what I'm going to do. My mom's food is really good. On Christmas Eve she makes oven roasted chicken with green beans, potatoes, and sweet Hawaiian rolls. After dinner we gather in the living room and watch a Christmas movie and eat popcorn. Afterwards, my family and I go into our own rooms and go to bed. It takes me a while to go to sleep because I just want it to be the day of the best holiday ever, Christmas!

IT'S FINALLY CHRISTMAS!! Every year on Christmas morning my parents and I wake up really early to open our presents. It's more like I wake up early and barge into their room yelling, "IT'S CHRISTMAS!" I always have to wait for them to get their coffee because every year they say, "Our coffee is important!" So every year it takes forever to open presents. Every year my mom and I wake up first and I beg her to let me open my stocking so I can at least see a little of what I got. My parents always get little presents for my pets so they don't feel left out. Mostly we get them treats, lots and lots of treats.

Once we are finished opening our presents, we clean up all the wrapping paper and watch a Christmas movie and eat candy. Christmas is the one time of the year that I can eat candy all day. We normally watch the Grinch but sometimes we watch the Elf. Halfway through the movie Mom gets up and starts making dinner. For dinner she makes ham, mashed potatoes or twice baked potatoes, green beans or corn, and Hawaiian rolls or she will make her own bread. When it is dinner time we eat. Later we make popcorn and watch another Christmas movie. We finally have to go to bed which is sad, because being a kid, I never want Christmas to end!

The Time I Caught The Elf

By Christian Rakes

WES

There are so many good things about Christmas. For example, I love the joy of opening presents, the tear of the wrapping paper, the anticipation, and the smile on my family's faces. But, here's the downside of Christmas. Think about all the money that is spent on Christmas every year. But that doesn't even come close to the worst part of Christmas, the Elf. He always makes a huge mess, and this year, I am determined to catch him!

So here's the plan. I will need a camera, a trap, and perseverance, because this might take some time. Lucky for me, my grandma gave me a Go-Pro camera for Christmas last year. Now all I need is a trap, and courage, which I have yet to find. I will use a wooden board for the base, some PVC pipe for support, and metal wire for the walls and roof.

Now it's time to set the trap. I put the trap on the kitchen table and the camera on the bar. I also fill

the trap with snacks to lure the Elf in. Now, I wait. After about an hour, I get up to go to the bathroom, and as soon as I turn my back, I hear a loud snap. I caught him! I am so happy. Then, I wake up from a very weird dream. I get up and go downstairs for breakfast and I look at the bar and there is the Elf. I have actually caught him after all.

By Maciah Marshall

WES

It was late at night, and I heard a noise outside, so I got up off my bed and went to my window. I looked outside and didn't see any dogs, cats, burglars, bears, or wolves. I saw nothing, so I wobbled back to my bed and sat down, laid back, pulled the blanket over my head, and slowly started drifting asleep.

But as soon as I was about to fall asleep, I heard a very loud bang coming from my living room. When I heard that, I jolted up and grabbed the nearest thing to me, which was a bat, and started going downstairs very slowly and cautiously. On the last step, I dropped the bat and saw a very big man wearing an outfit with the colors of red, black, white, and a dash of yellow on his belt. He was putting presents under the tree and eating chocolate chip cookies with a cold glass of white milk.

When he turned around, he looked at me with a gleaming face and slowly started to fade away. At the last second the man told me, "Merry Christmas, and I'll see you next year," and he waved goodbye to me as he faded away. I instantly started to sprint back to my room and jumped in my bed, closed my eyes, and finally went to sleep.

As the next morning hit, I got up, still a little tired. I walked downstairs and saw so many presents under my tree. One of the presents had a card on it saying, "Don't be a bad boy next year, or you'll get coal."

Snowy Day

By Brayden Bowman

WES

I wake up in the morning, ready to play
I look outside and it's snowing today!
I rush to my closet and put on my boots,
Then run downstairs to eat some Fruit Loops.
I walk outside and get my sled,
I slid down the hill and hit my head.
I pick up some snow to have a snowball fight,
Then I throw the snowball with all of my might!
This is what I do on a snowy day,
I run around with my friends and play.
Later I go inside and rest,
I sleep like a little bird in its nest!

Christmas Trees

By Camden Bullins

WES

Trees are short and trees are tall,
Some lose their leaves in the fall.
Trees are fat and trees are skinny,
Some are scarce and some are plenty.
Trees are big and trees are small,
But Christmas trees are the best of all.

By Blake Miles

WES

The wind outside made Daisy fearful,
But the snow afterward made everyone cheerful.
Daisy sat in her room the next day,
Hoping to catch a glimpse of Santa's sleigh.
Then came Christmas Eve night,
When Daisy awoke with a terrible fright.
She looked out the window and saw nothing but snow,
But later heard an enthusiastic, "Ho, Ho, Ho!"
Daisy knew that Santa was here,
But all she could do was cheer.
She thought of going downstairs to say hey,
But thought it better to see him leave in his sleigh.
Daisy told her parents Christmas Eve was the best night,
Even though the sound on the roof gave her quite a fright.
Now in the middle of the night, every Christmas Eve,
You know who Daisy is hoping to see.

December Dreams

By Daylin Blevins

MODE

Snow drifts down with quiet grace,
Softly settling on each place,
Streetlights hum in winter's air,
Spreading warmth through nights so bare.
Whispers float through silver light,
Candles glowing throughout the night,
Under winter's gentle shade,
Hold the dreams December made.
Footprints on a moonlit street,
Where distant stars and silence meet.
And for a moment all feels new,
Held in frost and pale blue hue.
A sip of cocoa, a soft embrace,
Time slows down in gentle space,
And in the still of winter's art,
Christmas rests within the heart.

(See Seventh Grade Entries p.5)

Seventh Grade Entries

(cont. from page 4)

A Christmas Snow

By Blake Wood

MODE

Snow oh snow
With a white glow.
The wind is a breeze
the water did freeze.
Christmas near
It's full of cheer

Christmas night

By Happy Martin

MODE

Christmas cheer
All around to hear
Lights up the night
Colorful and bright
Putting cookies on a plate
Hoping Santa won't be late
Don't forget the reindeer too
Giving them a snack to chew
Stockings hanging nice and
neat,
Fireplace warming up our feet.
Everything is calm and still,
Waiting for that Christmas
thrill.
Soon the morning light will

glow,

Making smiles start to show.
Presents underneath the tree
Christmas joy for you and me

CHRISTMAS

By Kaya Reeder

BRES

C - Christ
H - Holiday
R - Reindeer
I - Icing
S - Stockings
T - Trees
M - Manger
A - Angels
S - Santa

SNOWMEN

By Amelia Bowman

BRES

S - Scarves
N - Noses
O - Olaf!
W - White
M - Melting
E - Exciting
N - Nice



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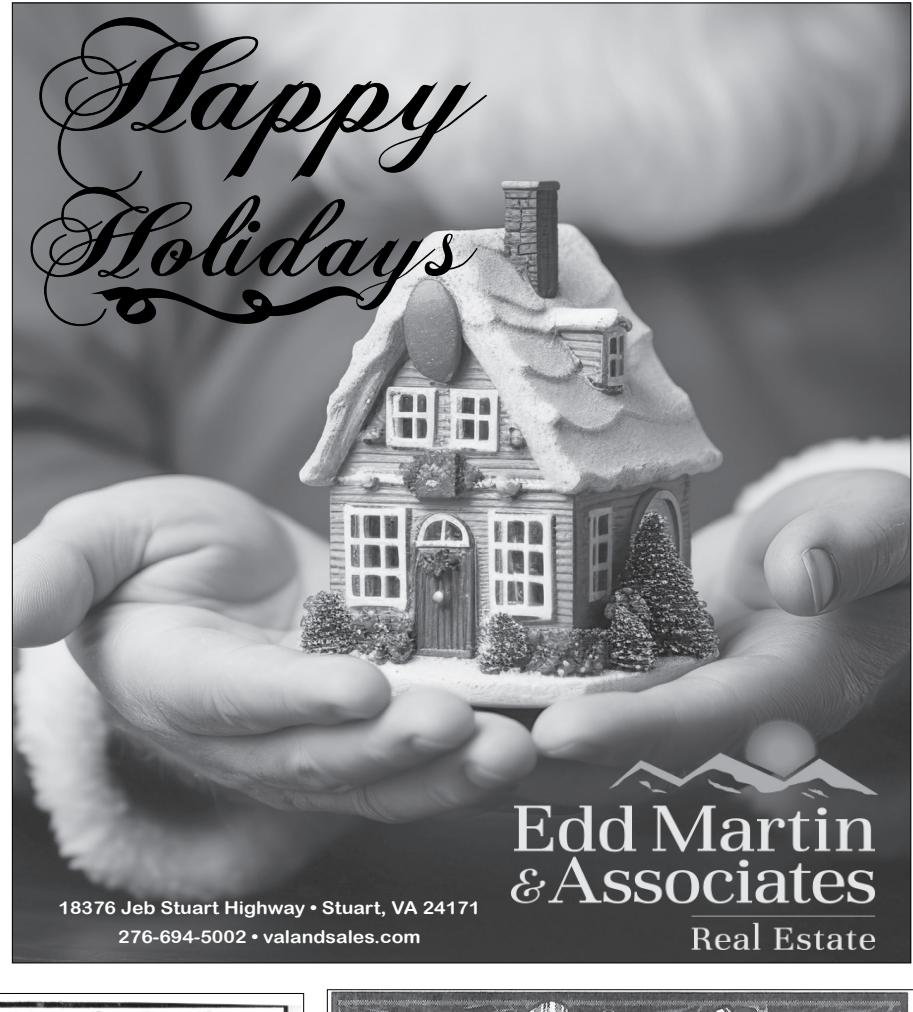
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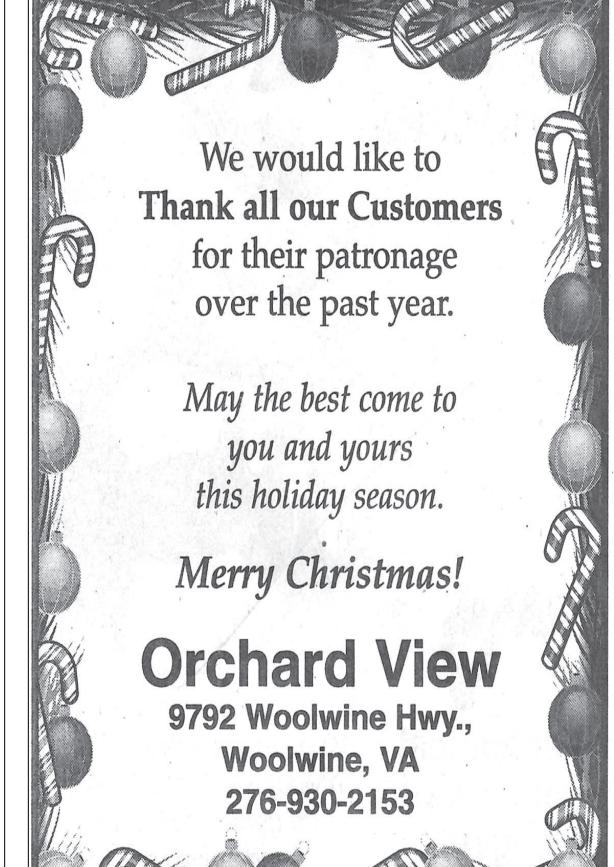
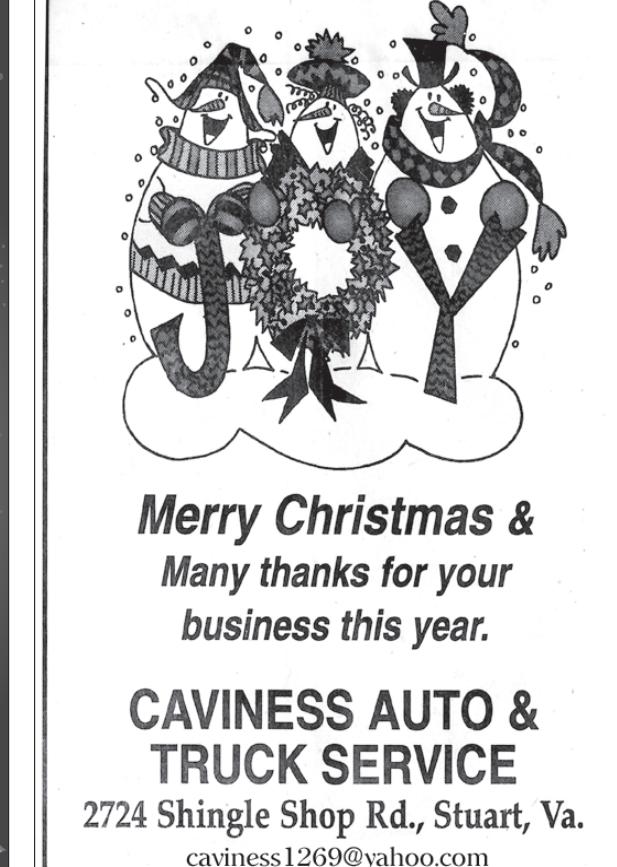
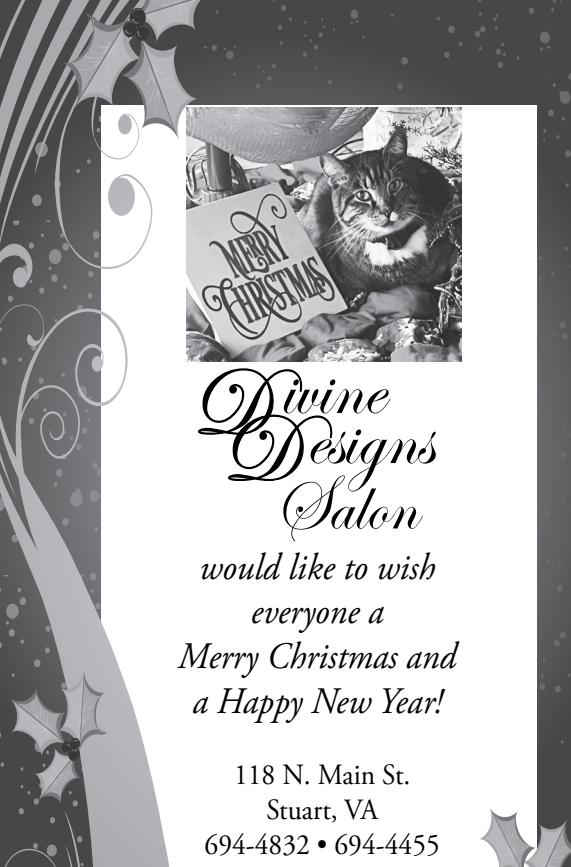
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you and yours
this holiday season.*
Merry Christmas!

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holidays, and we're very grateful to be
here with so many good neighbors
like you. Thanks for making us feel so
welcome in this community with your
kindness and friendship.

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season is filled with peace,
joy and contentment.
Merry Christmas and best
wishes to you and yours!



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For unto us a child is born,
Unto us a Son is given
- Isaiah 9:6



Joy to you and yours at this
special time of year!

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