



THE ENTERPRISE

Vol. 150 No. 4 Website: www.theenterprise.net STUART, VIRGINIA WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026

USPS 523-500 \$1.50

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In a social media post over the weekend, the Jeb Stuart Rescue Squad thanked VDOT for "helping us safely reach our destination. Your assistance made a real difference, and we truly appreciate the support you provide to emergency responders every day." Photo Contributed

Weekend storm impacts = lighter than forecast =

By Staff Reports

A potentially historic winter storm forecast to bring heavy snow, sleet, and freezing rain passed through Patrick County without requiring the use of any of the county's seven warming centers, officials said.

Emergency Management Director Scottie Cassell said widespread power outages never materialized, reducing the need for residents to seek shelter.

"Once off, my understanding is crews were able to restore it fairly quickly," Cassell said. "Luckily, we got sleet instead of the freezing rain they were calling for, so we didn't get ice accumulation that would have brought trees down."

Cassell said emergency services continue to monitor high winds this week, which could still cause outages and prompt the use of warming centers.

With temperatures expected to remain cold throughout the week, Cassell said icy road conditions

may persist and be potentially dangerous to motorists.

"It's going to be hard for the ice to melt, and once it does, it's going to refreeze overnight because temperatures will be in the 20s and teens all week," he said. "Everybody just needs to be careful when they do get out."

Cassell credited the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for its response, noting that major roads were passable as crews worked on secondary routes.

"VDOT is doing a great job so far," he said. "The main roads are passable and looking good. They're working on secondary roads now, so hopefully we'll be able to get some normalcy back soon."

According to the National Weather Service in Blacksburg, the cold temperatures that prompted a Cold Weather Advisory Monday and Tuesday, Jan. 26-27, are forecast to remain throughout the week, with lows in the single digits.

= Man sought in connection = with Salem Highway shooting =



Michael Cody Solomon

A man was wounded in an alleged Saturday shooting incident on Salem Highway, prompting Patrick County authorities to launch a search for a Martinsville man believed to have fled the scene.

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office was notified by the Stuart Community Hospital on Saturday, January 24, that a patient arrived at the emergency room with a gunshot wound. Deputies responded and interviewed the male victim. They learned that he was allegedly shot at a vacant lot on Salem Highway, just south of Stuart.

Deputies then responded to that location, secured the crime scene, and collected evidence.

Sheriff Dan Smith said the victim had pre-planned a meeting at

the location on Salem Highway with Michael Cody Solomon, 29, of 141 Navy Lane, Martinsville.

Solomon arrived first at the scene, in a black SUV, Smith said. The victim, identified as Allen Michael Bowman, 27, of Stuart, arrived shortly thereafter. Smith alleged that during this meeting, several rounds were fired at Bowman, striking him once in the wrist.

The suspect allegedly fled the scene and is believed to be in Henry County.

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office currently holds warrants on Solomon for attempted armed robbery, malicious wounding, and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony in connection with the incident.

Anyone with information on Solomon's whereabouts is urged to contact the Patrick County Sheriff's Office 911 Communications Center confidentiality at 276-694-3161, or the Henry County 911 Emergency Communications Center at 276-638-8751.

"We are working closely with our HCSO partners to see that Solomon is arrested expeditiously," Smith said in a Sunday news release. He added that the incident was isolated, between known acquaintances, and the general public is not in danger.

Investigator Jason Kruse is

leading the investigation.

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Walker, Harrell to lead school board



Amy Walker, of the Mayo River District, and Lester Harrell, of the Peters Creek District, were elected to serve as the school board's chair and vice chair for 2026.

By Taylor Boyd

The Patrick County School Board elected its chair and vice-chair at its Jan. 22 reorganizational meeting.

Amy Walker, of the Mayo River District, was re-elected as the board's chair. This is her second term in the role.

Walker was one of two candidates nominated for the position.

Walker was nominated by Lester Harrell, of the Peters Creek District.

Rob Martin, of the Dan River District, was nominated by Walter Scott, of the Smith River District.

Walker won in a 2-1-2 vote.

Shannon Harrell, of the Blue Ridge District, and Lester Harrell voted for Walker, while Scott voted for Martin. Walker and Martin abstained from voting.

"Thank you all so much. I enjoyed serving this board and our school division over the past year, and I look forward to what we do this year. I know it's going to be good, we've got great things ahead of us, and I look forward to working with

all of you," Walker said.

The board also elected Lester Harrell to the vice chair position by a 2-1-2 vote.

He was nominated for the role by Martin; Walker was nominated by Shannon Harrell.

Scott and Martin voted for Lester Harrell, and Walker voted for Shannon Harrell. The two nominees abstained from voting.

The school board also appointed Sara Leigh Collins as its Clerk and Deree Reeves as its Deputy Clerk.

The board appointed its representatives to special committees and adopted the Virginia School Board Association (VSBA) code of conduct and the Roberts Rules of Order.

In other matters, the board:

*Heard the superintendent's report.

*Approved the consent agenda.

*Approved the Patrick County High School 2026-2027 Program of Studies.

*Approved policy updates.

*Approved the personnel report as amended.

Council hears mid-fiscal-year budget review =

By Taylor Boyd

The Stuart Town Council heard an update on its mid-fiscal-year 2026 budget at its Wednesday, Jan. 21, meeting.

Town Manager Bryce Simmons said the town remains in a stable financial position, with solid cash reserves and a manageable debt profile at the halfway point of the fiscal year.

"Currently, we are at sort of a break even. What we have come in is what we have going out. I think our net position right now is about \$153,000," he said.

Simmons said the town's general fund is healthy, its water fund is stable, and its sewer fund is probably the most efficient. He said that was notable because when he began working for the town, the sewer fund was lower than the water fund.

"I have never, ever, ever seen another municipality that their sewer fund was less than their water fund because it's much more expensive to treat wastewater than it is to treat water. It's really energy intensive, it is very chemical in-



Patrick County Administrator Michael McGuinness formally introduced himself to the Stuart Town Council at its Jan. 21

tensive, and it's just a much harder process from both a chemical and an engineering standpoint," he said.

Simmons said issues in the town's sanitation budget stem from ongoing maintenance problems with its garbage trucks.

"Which we continue to have issues with. Our old garbage truck, I learned today that the fuel pump went out, so that's going to be about a \$2,500 fix just for the pump itself," he said.

However, Simmons said the sanitation

budget is expected to decrease due to the retirement of a longtime employee, which will reduce wage costs associated with that position.

"In conclusion I do

think that an eval-

uation of all the town

utility rates, which

includes the town and

the PSA (Public Ser-

vice Authority), to en-

sure long-term cost re-

covery and we need to

really start looking at

our maintenance costs

closer," Simmons said.

In other matters, the

(See Council p. 2)

General Assembly unveils new permanent exhibit

Visitors to the Capitol Visitor Center can now experience a new interactive exhibit exploring the history of the Virginia Capitol, its architecture and the workings of democracy in the Commonwealth, with the debut of "PEOPLE. BUILDING. DEMOCRACY.," a creative, immersive, high-energy exploration of the Capitol's history, its architecture, and the living process of democracy.

This new, lively, and interactive experience has transformed the Capitol Visitor Center into an opportunity to much more fully engage with the history of the Capitol and the process for crafting and passing legislation in the Commonwealth.

Visitors to the Virginia State Capitol now will experience:

• **PEOPLE:** This is a captivating gallery of nearly 250 custom-commissioned digital watercolors of some of the individuals who shaped and enriched the story of the Capitol. Here, visitors learn about the Capitol and the Commonwealth, from the earliest chap-

ters to those still being written. Kiosks on the South walls invite visitors to learn more about the varied people and their "Capitol Connection."

• **BUILDING:** This diorama is the first of its kind – a translucent 3D-printed scale model that uses a large LED surface as its base. Visitors learn the history of Capitol Square over the centuries and its neighbors through a unique projected video documentary built from maps and satellite views.

• **DEMOCRACY:** A large ball machine that teaches visitors the journey of a bill through the legislative process with motion, momentum, and movement. The machine stands eight feet tall and aptly depicts the key steps in Virginia's legislative process. A kiosk near the machine on the East wall allows visitors to explore the details of how a bill becomes law in Virginia.

The innovative exhibit marks the final milestone in a series of major initiatives designed to in-

crease public access, modernize the visitor experience, and improve Virginians' active engagement with the General Assembly and the State Capitol. In collaboration with C&G Partners – a premier museum design firm in New York – the exhibit is an exceptional foundation for the overall visitor experience. The exhibit will be in place in a permanent capacity.

"We set out to give the Virginia State Capitol the museum-quality visitor experience it deserves – and I believe we've exceeded that goal," said G. Paul Nardo, Clerk of the Virginia House of Delegates. "Seeing this seven-year effort come to life is truly gratifying because we are not only a working place of government, but also a popular historic destination."

"Virginia's Capitol welcomes thousands of visitors each month, from students to national and international tourists to lifelong Virginians," said Susan Clarke Schaar, Clerk of the Senate. "This new exhibit offers a state-of-the-art, unforgettable welcome into our Capitol and Capitol Square for visitors of all ages."

Adding to the excitement of an enhanced visitor experience, a new architectural exhibit featuring a dollhouse-style model of the

State Capitol built from nearly 50,000 LEGO bricks is the center of a new architectural exhibit. Designed and built by Benjamin Edlavitch, a fourth-year architecture student at the University of Virginia, this intricate model is an instant must-see for visitors of all ages. The LEGO model is surrounded by architectural drawings and a reproduction of the original model of the Capitol by Jean-Pierre Fouquet.

"Building the LEGO model became a way to read and share anew the architectural narrative of the Virginia State Capitol. I'm walking away from this project with a new appreciation for the creativity that has gone into this building over the last 200 years," said Benjamin Edlavitch.

The new virtual tour is accessible at <https://vga.virginia.gov/visit/guided-virtual-tours/virtual-tour/>, and already had been incorporated into the recently redesigned Virginia General Assembly website, the first available initiative of this enhanced visitor experience. The new and engaging virtual experience brings Capitol architecture, artwork, and other elements of the historic Virginia State Capitol to users anywhere in the Commonwealth, across the nation, or around the world.

"Buy Your Love Local" Pop-Up Market Coming to Downtown Stuart

The Stuart Farmers' Market, in partnership with Bull Mountain Arts and the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, is excited to announce the "Buy Your Love Local" Pop-Up Market, an indoor shopping event celebrating local food, art, and community.

This special pop-up market will feature vendors from the Stuart Farmers' Market alongside Bull Mountain Arts members, offering a wide variety of locally produced foods and locally made artwork. From handcrafted gifts to fresh, local goods, the market provides the perfect opportunity to sup-

port area makers while finding a one-of-a-kind gift for someone special.

The "Buy Your Love Local" Pop-Up Market will be held on Friday, February 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Calliope, Circus for the Arts, located at 410 Patrick Avenue in Downtown Stuart.

Residents and visitors alike are encouraged to stop by, shop local, and celebrate the creativity and talent of Patrick County.

For more information, visit the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce website at www.patrick-chamber.com.

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Council

(cont. from page 1)



Patrick County Economic Development & Tourism Director James Houchins (right) and Stuart Town Manager Bryce Simmons (left) discussed VA250 celebrations.

council:

- Heard an introduction from Patrick County Administrator Michael McGuinness.
- Heard the 2025 review from Stuart Volunteer Fire Department Assistant Chief Austin Bryant.
- Heard from Patrick County Economic Development and Tourism Director James Houchins about the VA250 celebrations.
- Approved paying for two half-page ads for the Patrick County magazine.
- Approved continuing the town's membership with the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce.
- Discussed a draft letter for the Landmark Drive road transfer.
- Heard an update on unsafe structures in town.
- Heard an update



Stuart Volunteer Fire Department Assistant Chief Austin Bryant (standing) provided an overview of the department during the 2025 review.

- Heard an update on public works projects.
- Approved the Dec. 17 meeting minutes.
- Paid the bills.
- Council member Erica Wade did not attend the meeting.

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Around 45,000 Virginia households have a residential solar installation. (Adobe Stock)

Solar advocates in Va. rally against proposed metering rule change

By Zamone Perez

Virginia News Connection

Clean-energy advocates are asking Virginia's utility regulator to reject a proposal from Dominion Energy to change metering rules for new solar panel users.

The proposal by Dominion Energy means people with solar panels installed might end up having to pay the company, even when they generated enough electricity to cover their usage. It would also change how excess energy is measured — from a yearly measurement to one every 30 minutes.

That means it would be virtually impossible for people to bank kilowatts during low-usage months to make up for high-usage months — and lead to higher energy bills for solar users.

Brandon Praileau, the Virginia program director with Solar United Neighbors, said the proposal could make solar a bad investment for individuals and communities.

"They would then have to pay a little bit if they were to produce the same amount and consume the same amount," said Praileau. "The

new rate that Dominion is proposing would leave them with some financial balance to pay to Dominion towards their energy bill."

Dominion has framed the issue as a matter of fairness to those who are not solar users — and reflects the real-time realities of energy usage that face the grid.

According to Environment Virginia, the Commonwealth is a leader in renewable energy generation. Solar arrays in Virginia generated enough electricity to power 750,000 homes in 2024.

Praileau added that if Dominion's proposal is approved, it could force many solar installers, often local businesses, to cut jobs.

"This proposal would literally have an outsized impact on people's abilities to feed their families," said Praileau. "If there's a downward trend in interest for solar, that means more smaller, residential installers may have to close or lay people off."

More than 5,000 people in the Commonwealth are employed in the solar industry, according to a George Mason University report.

Griffith introduces hemp-derived products legislation

U.S. Congressman Morgan Griffith, R-Salem, chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, and U.S. Congressman Marc Veasey (D-TX) introduced the Hemp Enforcement, Modernization, and Protection (HEMP) Act. This new measure is intended to create the pathway for federal regulation of cannabidiol (CBD) products. The bill creates a first-of-its-kind federal regulatory framework for hemp-derived (or CBD) products intended for human use within the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Currently, hemp-derived businesses operate with no federal guidance, causing states to adopt differing regulations of hemp-derived products. This has created a patchwork of state laws, essentially allowing for a wild west market for these products and raising serious public health concerns.

Griffith's HEMP Act is designed to create a future for American hemp products. By creating this pathway, it will bring regulatory certainty and allow for safer products to be sold in the United States.

This bill only regulates hemp-derived products and not cannabis. In fact, cannabis is explicitly prohibited from being regulated through this pathway in the draft.

Following bill introduction, Griffith said, "Despite raising repeated concerns about the ongoing confusion regarding the safety, consumption and sale of CBD-containing products until a discussion draft of this bill was circulated, I believe we have yet to see meaningful progress at the federal level."

"I am proud to lead the effort in the House along with Representative Veasey to present a path forward for the federal regulation of CBD products. After discussions with stakeholders, federal officials

and other relevant authorities, I believe the HEMP Act is a positive step forward to deliver federal clarity to the American hemp landscape, protecting consumers and providing a stable marketplace for legitimate producers."

"I look forward to working with my colleagues, the Trump Administration and the FDA to perfect this bill," he added.

Griffith's measure follows months of circulating a discussion draft to receive input from industry leaders, stakeholders and agencies.

Under the HEMP Act, the FDA must initiate a rulemaking process to set milligram limits of CBD products. If the FDA fails to release a final rule within three years of the measure's enactment, federal law will automatically establish CBD intoxicating limits of 5 milligrams per serving and 30 milligrams per package.

Griffith is also a co-sponsor to H.R. 7024, the Hemp Planting Predictability Act. Federal policy related to the hemp industry was impacted by the November 2025 government funding package, which included a provision that virtually bans intoxicating hemp products. This provision is set to take effect in November 2026. The Hemp Planting Predictability Act is designed to protect American hemp farmers from what is virtually a ban on hemp products by providing a two-year extension.

Since the 116th Congress, Griffith has worked to encourage the FDA to regulate hemp-derived products.

In fact, in September 2022, Griffith helped lead a letter with then-Health Subcommittee Chair Brett Guthrie to express frustration over President Biden's FDA and their inaction in regulating CBD products.

Arrests Reported

The Patrick County Sheriff's Office reported the following:

*Paul Travis Greer, 42, of Western Virginia Regional Jail, was charged Jan. 6 with probation violation. Western VA Regional Jail made the arrest for Patrick County.

*Julie Diann Padgett, 60, of Stuart, was charged Jan. 7 with fail to appear. Deputy C.L. Adkins was the arresting officer.

*Bo Dale Vipperman, 30, of Stuart, was charged Jan. 7 with fail to comply with terms of bond. Sgt. J.G. Pickerel was the arresting officer.

*Travis Lee Shumate, 40, of Claudville, was charged Jan. 7 with one count each malicious wounding, abduction by force, and assault. Inv. Tennille E. Jessup was the arresting officer.

*Brittney Nicole Wall-Creed, 35, of Claudville, was charged Jan. 7 with probation violation. Sgt. T. Dalton made the arrest for Carroll County.

*Jachary James Denny, 28, of Martinsville, was charged Jan. 8 with one count each failure to appear on a felony case and failure to appear on a misdemeanor offense. Sgt. E.J. Litz made the arrest for Henry County.

*Rebecca Jane Barnett, 45, of Stuart, was charged Jan. 10 with interfere with property rights. Senior Deputy M.R. Hodges was the arresting officer.

*Robert Allen Wells, 41, of Bassett, was charged Jan. 10 with interfere with property rights. Martinsville PD made the arrest for Patrick County.

*James Wayne Greer, 43, of Stuart, was charged Jan. 11 with one count each grand larceny, disregard law enforcement command, and reckless driving. Sgt. C.L. Elgin was the arresting officer.

*Ashley Lee Durham, 39, of Danville, was charged Jan. 1 with drive motor vehicle while license is revoked/suspended. Deputy C.L. Adkins was the arresting officer.

*Michael Lewis Quinn, 42, no address available, was charged Jan. 11 with probation violation. Martinsville PD made the arrest for Patrick County.

*Steven Lawrence Hancock, 40, of Mt. Airy, NC, was charged Jan. 12 with one count each possess firearm by convicted violent felon and possess ammunition on person by convicted felon. Deputy C. Pilson was the arresting officer.

*Zachary Thomas Golding, 23, of Mt. Airy, NC, was charged Jan. 12 with one count each assault and intentional damage. Senior Deputy D. Dillon was the arresting officer.

*Roy Melvin Davis, 69, of Patrick Springs, was charged Jan. 12 with one count each brandish firearm/etc. and obstruct justice. Master Deputy M.T. Rorrer was the arresting officer.

*Jonathan Moore Tate, 21, of Ararat, was charged Jan. 14 with 10 counts trespass and three counts stalking. Sgt. C.L. Elgin was the arresting officer.

*Michael Paul Hairfield, 55, no address available, was charged Jan. 14 with fail to comply with terms of bond. Deputy M. Dalton was the arresting officer.

*Jerome Johnson, 64, of Spencer, was charged Jan. 17 with drive motor vehicle while license is revoked/suspended. Lt. D.L. Foley was the arresting officer.

*Joseph Ellis Lawson, 39, of Stuart, was charged Jan. 18 with drive while intoxicated. Lt. D.L. Foley was the arresting officer.

*Aimee Renee Willis, 40, of Patrick Springs, was charged Jan. 19 with 1st offender violation. Senior Deputy M.R. Hodges made the arrest for Franklin County.

*Katina R. Vipperman, 41, of Stuart, was charged Jan. 20 with probation violation. Senior Deputy M.R. Hodges was the arresting officer.

*Jordan Anthony Capps, 24, of Lexington, NC, was charged Jan. 21 with one count each probation violation and fail to appear. Senior Deputy B. Fields was the arresting officer.

*William Bradley Rea, 42, of Bassett, was charged Jan. 21 with one count each shoplifting and violation of bail/pretrial services. Master Deputy M.T. Rorrer made the arrest for Danville and Henry County.

*Gabriel Michael McGugan, 22, of Patrick Springs, was charged Jan. 21 with intentional damage. Deputy D. Celozzi was the arresting officer.

*Gary Tilley Jr., 41, of Henry County Adult Detention Center, was charged Jan. 22 with three counts probation violation. Henry County made the arrest for Patrick County.

*Jarryl Barbour, 64, of Stuart, was charged Jan. 22 with one count each assault and battery and prevent/delay communications. Lt. D.L. Foley was the arresting officer.

*Jocelyn Donita Younger, 22, of Woolwine, was charged Jan. 22 with assault and battery. Sgt. J.G. Pickerel was the arresting officer.

*Timothy Underwood, 27, of Ferrum, was charged Jan. 23 with three counts probation violation. Franklin County made the arrest for Patrick County.

Annual Farm Management Institutes set for February

The Farm Credit Knowledge Center will host its annual Farm Management Institutes at the West Virginia State Fairgrounds in Lewisburg, W. Va. on February 23, 2026, and at the Holiday Inn at Tanglewood in Roanoke, Va. on

February 24. Dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. and the program will begin at 6 both days.

Farm Management Institute is an annual free educational offering from the Farm Credit Knowledge Center in which participants will hear from Dr. David Kohl, Professor Emeritus of Virginia Tech. Participants will have the opportunity to interact with Dr. Kohl as he covers two different topics at each location. Dr. Kohl will address the

"Nuts and Bolts of Business Transition" in Lewisburg and "The Management Mindset of Business and Life" in Roanoke. In Lewisburg, Dr. Kohl will provide strategies, actions and tactics that are critical for success in developing, sustaining and growing agricultural businesses and operations. In Roanoke,

Dr. Kohl will present key strategies that prioritize resilience, agility and nimbleness while navigating agricultural technology and innovation that may pose opportunities for your business while facing consumer demand.

Kyle Clevenger, Knowledge Center Director, shared, "Lifelong learning and networking are key components to success in any business. This year's Farm Management Institute will be beneficial and informative to agricultural producers of all experience levels, and any size or scope of operation.

Whether you are just starting the transition process for your farm, are midway through a transition or have already made the shift to the next generation, this program is for you."

Registration can be made by visiting FarmCreditofVirginia.com/Knowledge-Center/Events, calling 304-822-4173 ext. 2218 or by emailing the Knowledge Center at KnowledgeCenter@FCVirginia.com.

Thank You for reading
The Enterprise

Tax Season Hurts a Little Less



**Morgan
Griffith**
Representative

The issue of higher costs continues to be a major theme in conversations.

During the Biden-Harris Administration, I spoke with many Ninth District residents who voiced their concerns with the U.S. economy.

Despite Democratic officials' insistence that our economy was doing fine, many in the country felt differently.

Accordingly, in 2024, the American people elected a Republican trifecta in part to fix inflation, stimulate the economy and grow your pocketbooks.

I agree that Congress needs to do more to help lower costs. Our progress in accomplishing this goal should come into focus as Americans prepare for the tax filing season.

Monday, January 26, 2026, marks the first day of the tax filing season. From then until Wednesday, April 15, 2026, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will collect approximately 164 million individual tax returns!

For many Ninth District families, organizing W-2, 1099 and other tax forms can be a stressful and frustrating process.

While filing taxes is no fun, it is worth highlighting the pro-growth tax provisions that Congress passed last year and that President Trump signed into law.

I worked with Republicans to put together a reconciliation package, now called the "Working Families Tax Cuts," to help stimulate growth, strengthen our economy and provide tax relief to all people, including working families.

Democrats claim this bill only benefits big businesses and the very wealthy.

But let's examine some of the provisions to see who actually benefits from the "Working Families Tax Cuts."

A signature provision in the reconciliation package is the permanent extension of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA).

The TCJA provisions were set to expire at the end of 2025. If Congress did not act, American families would have seen dramatic tax increases.

Many families filing their taxes would have seen their standard deduction slashed from \$30,000 to \$16,000. This would have forced those families to pay even more in taxes.

I voted to stop this harmful tax hike!

Other essential working class-friendly provisions include no taxes on tips and no taxes on hourly overtime.

This brand new policy is bound to reward our restaurant servers, manufacturing workers and other blue-collar laborers by letting them keep more of their hard-earned money.

Republicans also delivered a "senior bonus", where those who collect social security retirement can claim an additional \$6,000 deduction.

The reconciliation bill not only provides tax help for working people, but for businesses and communities as well.

Republicans restored 100% bonus depreciation. This allows businesses to take an accelerated full depreciation in the year they purchase new equipment. This gives businesses more purchasing power in the present as opposed to waiting a few more years before they justify a purchase.

Accelerated depreciation helps all businesses. And yes, even big businesses.

But big businesses can shift assets around and cover the cost of a slower depreciation schedule. Small businesses often have cash flow issues and the ability to take the cost of the equipment off their income taxes more quickly is a big advantage.

Further, rural businesses and communities are especially primed to capitalize thanks to the permanent extension of Opportunity Zones.

Also created in 2017, the bipartisan Opportunity Zone policy incentivizes investments in economically distressed regions of the country.

It is a win-win policy, where investors receive boosted tax incentives and local communities become engines for renewed economic activity and increased job opportunity.

In the reconciliation package, we sweetened the tax benefits for Opportunity Zones in rural regions. The investment threshold for improving a facility is reduced and the capital gains placed into rural investments are subject to a tax discount at a rate triple non-rural investments.

As Opportunity Zone eligibility and maps are determined ahead of 2027, I look forward to the economic prospects that Opportunity Zones bring to Virginia's rural communities.

We are already seeing our rural communities take advantage of tax policies that we promoted in the reconciliation package.

The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC), which the reconciliation bill permanently extended, was recently credited for helping begin construction of a new medical office building in Tazewell, Virginia!

I believe that more community success stories will follow in rural Virginia thanks in part to the tax provisions that Republicans advanced in the reconciliation package.

Despite misleading claims, the reconciliation package tax policies are pro-small business, pro-rural, pro-working class and pro-growth!

As Republicans continue to work to rectify the inflation disaster created by the Biden-Harris economy, I am determined to promote policies that strengthen your financial prospects, boost your economic freedoms and protect you from harmful tax increases.

Don't Let Age Stop You

Age is a common excuse people use to let their physical fitness slip or resist the idea of beginning an exercise regimen. While age can certainly limit the extent of a person's physical ability—and there are valid health concerns about starting to do too much too quickly—age is not reason to neglect physical activity altogether. A person is never too old to improve their health through physical activity.

Take a look at Shirley Webb's story. Two years ago (when she was 76) the only exercise she got was mowing her lawn. At that time, she couldn't climb stairs without using the railing and was not able to get up off the floor without aid. Since joining a gym two years ago, Shirley has regained her ability to do both.^[1] Now take a look at the video below to see what else she was able to accomplish.

Shirley has now set deadlifting records in Illinois and Missouri in her age and weight groups. How much can she lift? Well, her record in Illinois is for 237 pounds. What an impressive accomplishment after only two years! This June, at an upcoming competition, Shirley hopes to set a personal record of 260 pounds.^[2] She is also hoping to set the first national record for deadlifting in her age group.^[3]

These days, Shirley goes to the gym at least twice a week and says she has no intention of stopping. In fact, she says that after working out, "I feel so much better than I did when I went in, and I just feel so good. I feel tremen-

dous."^[4] What a testament to the power of exercise to transform our health and our lives.

But it doesn't stop there. Shirley has also become an inspiration to others. Her trainer John Wright said, "She's gotten to the point where everybody greets her and is just absolutely impressed. She inspires everybody that goes to the gym and it's fun to see that".^[5] Shirley added, "I had one lady come in the gym and say, 'I saw your video, and I decided to come down and join this club.' That makes me feel good."^[6]

So what are you waiting for? If Shirley can do it, you can too! Maybe some day you'll even beat her record.

(Note this article was written years ago, however, the point still remains - "don't let age stop you.")

References:

[1, 2, 6] "Watch This 78-Year-Old Grandmother Deadlift 225 Pounds." The Blaze, March 30, 2016. <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2016/03/30/watch-this-78-year-old-grandmother-deadlift-225-pounds/>

[3, 4, 5] "Seventy-Eight-Year-Old Shirley Webb Can Deadlift 225 Pounds." espnW. Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://espn.go.com/espnw/culture/the-buzz/article/15085470/>.

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

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THE ENTERPRISE

Established in 1876

USPS 523-500

P.O. Box 429, Lewisburg, WV 24901

Phone (304) 647-5724 Mountain Media

www.theenterprise.net

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**The oldest continuously operated
business in Patrick County**

Published each Wednesday by Virginia Media, Inc.,

P.O. Box 429, Lewisburg, WV 24901.

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Postmaster: send address changes to The Enterprise, P.O. Box 348, Stuart, VA 24171-0348. Subscription Rates: \$41 per year in Patrick County, \$49 per year in state, \$48 per year out of state. Single copies \$1.50.

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Letters to the Editor

Kindness, history and hope at supervisor meeting

Several things caught my eye when I watched the video of the January 12, 2026, supervisors meeting. Highest on my list is the ceremony acknowledging the success of five-year-old Noah Beasley in fundraising almost six-thousand dollars for our animal shelter. Clearly his caring stems from his parents and they have a right to be very proud. His name reminds us of Noah whom God commanded to care for the animals in the ark so hopefully we can remember his name as we observe what no doubt will be many future achievements. It was great to watch our new county administrator and supervisors taking time to acknowledge this caring young man, and especially to see Mr. McGuinness joking and keeping his commitment to eat a dog treat if Noah exceeded what he raised last year. What a great example our county officials and this family displayed for all our youth. To be honest Mr. McGuinness, I and perhaps others, could admit eating crow at some supervisor's meetings, so maybe homemade dog treats are not so bad!! It might be a more jolly world if we all could laugh at ourselves more often.

I appreciated very much the board chairman giving Mrs. Crystal Harris adequate time to discuss the "Hospital Book." Many of our families were poor

but remember our parents somehow donating to build the hospital. What she had to say means a lot to many of our citizens. We hope the new hospital owners understand the pride this important history brings and our desire for a fitting display of the names of the contributors in this book. If so, we would expect them to happily provide a location where it is appropriately protected and displayed. Otherwise, it should be in our museum or other suitable location. Thanks, Mrs. Harris, for caring, and all your volunteer service to our county for so many years and in so many ways.

It is also very encouraging to continue to observe our new administrator delegating, supporting and complementing our dedicated county employees. His approach to communication, including a willingness to listen to others, his high energy level and general attitude, seems to be renewing the trust and respect of our citizens and making it fun for his staff to do the hard work necessary for our county to thrive. Hopefully the productive and cooperative tone generally prevalent in the supervisors meeting signals an era of increased teamwork and cooperation on everyone's part.

Steve Terry

Meadows of Dan

Patrick Pioneers

Rev. Robert Lee Peters and the Virginia Christian Orphanage of Stuart

By Beverly Belcher Woody

Patrick County's history is often told through land, churches, and families—but sometimes it is best understood through the life of one man whose calling reached far beyond county lines. Such is the story of Rev. Robert Lee Peters, a native of Henry County, Virginia, whose ministry, humanitarian work, and leadership gave rise to the Virginia Christian Orphanage of Stuart, an institution now gone but far from forgotten.

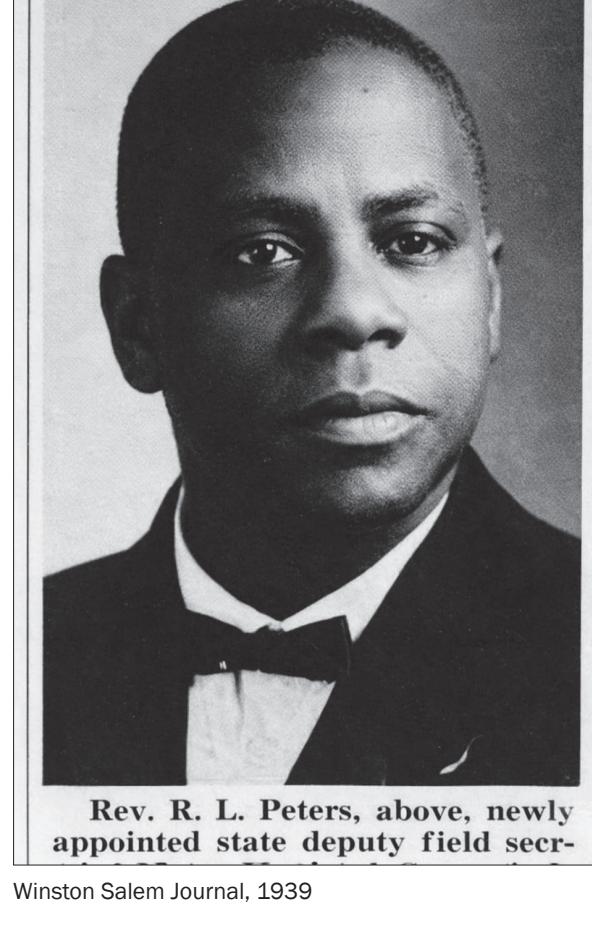
Rev. Peters devoted his life to service in the ministry and to founding institutions that sought to uplift the most vulnerable. According to a biographical notice published during his lifetime, his first church was the College Street Christian Church of Bristol, Tennessee, and over the course of his ministry he organized and built seven Christian churches. His work soon extended beyond the pulpit into education, social welfare, and evangelism on a national scale.

Among his most enduring legacies was the Virginia Christian Orphanage, established in Stuart, Patrick County, where Rev. Peters served as president for seven years. The orphanage was created to serve children of Stuart and the surrounding communities and was closely supported by the First Christian Church of Stuart, which held rallies and fundraising efforts beginning as early as February 18, 1912, to sustain the home. Rev. Peters later became the second pastor of First Christian Church, further tying his work to the religious and civic life of Patrick County.

Newspaper accounts from the early 20th century show that the orphanage was supported through a wide network of churches and community events. Revival meetings, anniversary services, rally days, and even a "Grand Moonlight Party" held on the lawn of Highmaple Street Christian Church in Winston-Salem raised funds for the orphanage. Children from the orphanage themselves participated in church programs under the leadership of the matron, Mrs. S. E. Preston, reminding congregations that the mission was personal and immediate.

Rev. Peters traveled extensively on behalf of the orphanage, preaching throughout Eastern North Carolina, Virginia, and beyond. Notices regularly announced his sermons at Disciple churches, where he spoke on subjects such as "The Six Friends in the Life of St. Paul," "Come Now and Let Us Reason Together," and "Humanity's Duty to Children." One article noted that seats were even reserved for white attendees—an important reminder of the complicated racial realities of the era and the spaces Rev. Peters navigated as a Black minister in the early 1900s.

Despite its strong beginnings and wide support, the Virginia Christian Orphanage ultimately fell victim to economic hardship. Multiple sources confirm that financial strain



Rev. R. L. Peters, above, newly appointed state deputy field sec-

Winston Salem Journal, 1939

following World War I and during the Depression years led to its closure. A legal notice later announced the selling out of the orphanage, stating that under a deed of trust, lands belonging to the Virginia Christian Orphanage in Patrick County were to be sold due to unpaid obligations connected to property purchased by Rev. Peters and others. The institution's closing marked the end of a noble effort shaped by faith, sacrifice, and community support.

Yet the closing of the orphanage did not mark the end of Rev. Peters' influence. He went on to become a National Evangelist for the Church of Christ, preaching from Boston to Los Angeles, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, and converting, baptizing, and welcoming thousands into the Christian Church. He founded the Twin City Industrial Workshop for the Blind, recognized as a pioneering effort for the blind community, and later helped establish the Winston-Salem Bible College, serving as its dean until his death.

Rev. Peters was widely respected in religious and civic circles. He held leadership roles including vice president of the National Christian Missionary Convention, deputy financial secretary of the North Carolina unit, president of the Afro Ministers' Alliance, and a member of the Forsyth County Commission for the Blind.

When Rev. Robert Lee Peters passed away at age 81, newspapers honored him as a "Veteran Pastor." Born May 15, 1869, in Leatherwood, Henry County, he taught school in Henry, Patrick, and Floyd Counties before entering the ministry. According to his death certificate filed

The Va. Christian Orphanage
—OF—
Stuart, Patrick Co., Va.

Solicits your aid. The cause is a worthy one: James 1:27, John 3:17. Money, clothing, Furniture, bed linen, canned goods, poultry, live stock, farming implements or anything that is used in the home. 12 notes to be met, one every three months, \$86.69 each. Any amount you may give will be thankfully received and highly appreciated.

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\$250.00 Rally
—AT THE—
Christian Church,
Stuart, - - - Virginia.
February, 18, 1912
For the benefit of the
VIRGINIA CHRISTIAN ORPHANAGE

All of our friends, both white and colored, who feel that this cause is a worthy one, are asked to help us in our efforts. We expect everybody in Stuart and the County of Patrick, who are able, to help in this rally. We will have three sermons on the day of the rally by one of the ablest negro preachers in the state of Virginia. Those who can't be present will please send their dona-

The Enterprise, Feb. 1912

in Forsyth County in 1951, he was born to Scipio Peters and Ruth Goolsby Peters. He was survived by his wife Maude Hairston Peters, the daughter of Dave and Caroline Hairston, his daughter Mrs. Savannah P. Friday, his son Frank, and extended family. Tributes marking his 51 years of preaching and 47 years as a city pastor reflected a lifetime devoted to service.

Today, the Virginia Christian Orphanage no longer stands, but its story remains woven into the history of Stuart, First Christian Church, and the broader Patrick County community. In remembering Rev. R. L. Peters and the Virginia Christian Orphanage, we honor not only a man and an institution, but a shared belief that communities are strongest when they care for their children. Though the buildings are gone, the spirit of that work still echoes through Patrick County's churches, families, and stories—quietly reminding us that compassion, once given, is never truly lost.

Information on Rev. R. L. Peters and the Virginia Christian Orphanage of Stuart was gleaned from Washington Daily News, January 20, 1912, and January 22, 1912; Winston-Salem Journal, April 21, 1912, May 1, 1912, June 7, 1914, August 31, 1947, and January 9, 1951; The Roanoke Times, December 5, 1914; The World News November 28, 1916, Jacksonville Journal, March 11, 1914; Martinsville Bulletin, December 31, 1929, and August 25, 1989; and of course, The Enterprise, February 1, 1912.

For 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 – About Claiming Social Security Early and Investing It

Dear Rusty: I am a 63-year-old single lady, and I have questions regarding Social Security "early retirement," though I will still be working full time.

I know there is a maximum allowable income limit and, if I exceed that, I will need to return probably 2/3 of my received Social Security benefit. I'm thinking about taking those early SS benefits (about \$1,400 per month) and putting them in my high yield savings or CD where I can gain the interest on it and have it stay "liquid" so I can return what I need to. My current interest rate is 3.65% on the savings, and over 4.25% on CD, with options for 3,6,9 mos. or longer- but I want to be able to access the money to pay Social Security back at the end of the year. Can you advise me on this?

Signed: Still Working but Wondering

Dear Still Working: I commend you, for investigating your options before claiming early Social Security benefits while still working. FYI, the 2026 annual earnings limit for those collecting early SS benefits is \$24,480 (changes annually). If your 2026 work earnings exceed the annual limit, Social Security will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. The annual earnings limit lasts until you reach your full retirement age (FRA), and the limit is about 2.5 times higher during the year you attain FRA.

FYI, when you apply for benefits, Social Security will ask if you are working and, if so,

how much you make. Using that info, they will evaluate whether you can take benefits now and, if so, how many months they can actually pay your benefits. For example, if your projected 2026 earnings are, say, \$100,000, you would be about \$75,000 over the annual limit which means that half of that (\$37,500) would need to be paid back to SS. Since your monthly SS benefit at your current age would be about \$1,400 per month, Social Security will say that you are temporarily ineligible to collect early benefits because you cannot pay back within one year what you would owe for exceeding the limit. In other words, they won't pay your SS benefits just yet because your earnings are too high and they do not want to overpay benefits which you will only need to return.

For additional perspective, if your expected 2026 earnings are less (say about \$50,000) – that means you would be about \$25,000 over the limit – about half of that (about \$12,500) would need to be paid back to SS. In that event, SSA would tell you they will withhold 9 months of your SS payments in advance and pay your benefits for only 3 months. This because the overpayment, with your current benefit of about \$1,400, could be recovered by withholding your SS payments for 9 months. They do not want to intentionally overpay your SS benefits.

So, despite your best repayment intentions, Social Security will not favor intentionally overpaying your benefits. Historically, overpayment of benefits due to exceeding the annual earnings limit has been a notoriously difficult issue for the Social Security Administration. So, to get your early SS benefits while you are working full time, you would likely

need to lie about your anticipated 2026 earnings on your application for SS benefits, which we strongly discourage. Keep in mind that this all changes when you reach your FRA (67), because the earning limit goes away entirely when you reach FRA (and the limit goes up by about 2.5 times in the year you attain full retirement age). So, depending on your earnings level, you may wish to either wait until your full retirement age, or until you stop working full time, to claim SS.

Now, as for the general idea of taking early benefits and investing them, many have said they wish to do that, and we understand that logic. Our caution is that it requires religious discipline to put the SS money into a higher yield investment vehicle to accomplish the goal of beating the SS increase realized when you wait to claim. Many who try it succumb to the temptation to use the invested funds for emergency needs (and sometimes non-emergency needs). I offer this only as something to be aware of, as some have shared that they failed in their investment objectives with their Social Security money.

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



Ayers to Play Soccer for West Virginia Tech

By Ashlee Mullis

Patrick County High School Senior, Skye Ayers, signed her letter of intent to play soccer at West Virginia Tech.

"Signing to play at the college level is more than an achievement—it's the reward for years of hard work, faith, and sacrifice, and the beginning of a new chapter where I get to chase my dreams at the next level," said Lawless.

In attendance for the signing were, front (l-r) Sister Taylor Lawless, Father Bradley Lawless, Hayden Lawless, Mother Amber Lawless. Back (l-r) PCHS Coach Brent Belcher, PCHS Head Coach Ryan Pendleton, PCHS Coach Brian Hubbard, PCHS Athletic Director Heidi Moore.

Marshall Signs to Play Softball at Bluefield

By Ashlee Mullis

Patrick County High School Senior, Gracie Marshall, signed her letter of intent to play softball at Bluefield University.

"I am so excited to be able to play softball in college. I want to give thanks to all the coaches, not just the ones that came but also to the ones who couldn't make it. Thank you again for believing in me and helping get me where I am today," Marshall said.

In attendance for the signing were, front row (l-r): Travel Ball Coach Bradley Vaughn, Father Tim Marshall, Gracie Marshall, Mother Darlene Marshall. Back row (l-r): PCHS Coach Brent Belcher, PCHS Head Coach Ryan Pendleton, PCHS Coach Brian Hubbard, PCHS Athletic Director Heidi Moore.



Sports Briefs

By Ashlee Mullis

Lady Cougars Top James River

The Varsity Lady Cougars took to the road on Monday, January 20, to take on the Lady Knights. Patrick County went home with a 51-40 win. Martina Hubbard had 11 points, 5 rebounds, 1 assist, 4 deflections, 1 steal, and 1 block. Kendra Worley had 10 points, 3 rebounds, 3 assists, 5 deflections, 4 steals, and 1 block in the win. Gracen Conner had 9 points, 3 rebounds, 2 assists, 5 deflections, and 4 steals. Chloe Hubbard had 9 points, 13 rebounds, 3 deflections, and 1 steal. Abigail Royall had 5 points, 4 rebounds, 1 assist, and 1 steal. Lauren Hazelwood added 4 points, 2 assists, 2 deflections, and 1 steal.

Varsity Girls Take Down Glenvar

The PCHS Varsity Girls traveled to Glenvar High School on Friday, January 16, defeating the Lady Highlanders 51-38. Kendra Worley had a big game, putting up 22 points, 6 rebounds, 3 assists, 8 deflections, 9 steals, and 1 block in the win. Abigail Royall had 9 points, 3 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 deflection, and 1 steal. Gracen Conner had 7 points, 8 rebounds, 3 assists, 7 deflections, and 5 steals. Chloe Hubbard had 6 points, 6 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 deflection, and 1 steal. Martina Hubbard added 4 points, 1 rebound, 3 assists, 5 deflections, and 2 steals.

Lawless to Continue Softball Career at P&HCC

By Ashlee Mullis

Patrick County High School Senior, Hayden Lawless, signed her letter of intent to play softball at Patrick & Henry Community College.

"Signing to play at the college level is more than an achievement—it's the reward for years of hard work, faith, and sacrifice, and the beginning of a new chapter where I get to chase my dreams at the next level,"

said Lawless.

In attendance for the signing were, front (l-r) Brother Tristan Moore, Father Dwayne Moore, Journey Moore, Mother Heidi Moore. Back (l-r) Coach David Martin, PCHS Coach Brett Belcher, PCHS Head Coach Ryan Pendleton, PCHS Coach Brian Hubbard, Travel Softball Coach Jerry Throckmorton, PCHS Principal Hope Perry.



Movement working to counteract MAHA misinformation

Make America Healthy Again is framing modern agriculture as contributing to Americans' health issues, but a movement called Growing a Healthier America is working to counter that narrative.

According to the Center for Food Integrity, the MAHA movement has shifted public perception around ingredients, food processing, modern agriculture and the role of farming in health. Emotionally charged narratives are creating confusion and eroding confidence in the food system.

GaHA is the food system's coordinated, collaborative, values-led response. Led by the CFI, GaHA brings together farmers, food makers, retailers, scientists and health voices to reclaim the narrative, counter misinformation and strengthen trust across the entire food value chain.

Michael Whitmer, CFI vice president, told farmers attending the American Farm Bureau Annual Convention in Anaheim in January that consumers have different ways of processing information. However, one thing CFI's research found is that shared values outweigh facts three to five times.

"Consumers need to know that you share the same values before they will believe your facts," Whitmer said. Because of that, anyone communicating information about farming needs to find common ground with consumers. "Food conversa-



tions can be emotional and personal."

The CFI analyzed more than 4,000 consumers to understand how Americans interpret truth, who they trust and how they engage with MAHA-aligned narratives. The researchers studied consumers' social values; political beliefs; where they work, live and play; and what information they read and share. Based on that research, CFI categorized consumers into several different "personas."

Whitmer focused on two of them during his work-

shop at the AFBF convention—the authenticity seeker and the comfort seeker.

Authenticity seekers make up 14% of the population and include everyone from baby boomers to Gen Z. They are looking for "raw, unfiltered experiences of real people sharing about food," Whitmer said. This group believes that MAHA is on the right track to correct a broken food system.

But farmers can counteract MAHA's incorrect findings by sharing real, genuine stories with authenticity seekers.

For example, these consumers often believe that seed oils are an ultra-processed byproduct of industrial agriculture and they blame commodity crops. The way to counteract that belief is to demonstrate that farmers who grow things like corn and wheat are real farmers who care deeply about the way their food is grown.

Comfort seekers make up 43% of the population and also represent all age groups. For them, the truth about our food system is validated by trusted experts including dietitians, nutritionists and social media influencers. They believe these people have done their research for them and they can trust it.

Whitmer said stories about traditional farming appeal to their desire for resonance, tradition and security.

Opioid Abatement Authority releases annual report

The Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) released its 2025 Annual Report, detailing a year of historic investment, strengthened accountability and measurable progress in addressing opioid use disorder and substance misuse across the Commonwealth.

According to the report, the OAA awarded more than \$46.7 million in new opioid settlement funding in 2025, including \$32.7 million

to 81 cities and counties and \$14 million to support initiatives led by 18 state agencies. Since beginning operations in late 2022, the OAA has directed more than \$112 million to 176 opioid abatement projects statewide, reinforcing Virginia's nationally recognized, collaborative approach to settlement fund stewardship.

The report also highlights Virginia's continued leadership in transparency and accountability, with 69 of the Commonwealth's 133 cities and counties voluntarily adopting the OAA's "Gold Standard" principles for the responsible use of opioid settlement dollars. These guardrails help ensure funds are spent effectively, in alignment with court-approved settlement agreements and the Code of Virginia.

"Virginia continues to lead the nation in smart, targeted investments across the full spectrum of solutions to combat the opioid crisis and support long-term recovery," said Senator Todd Pillion, Chair of the Opioid Abatement Authority. "This annual report reflects our commitment to accountability, data-driven

decision-making and partnerships that save lives and strengthen communities. While progress is clear, our work is far from finished, and the Authority remains focused on ensuring these resources reach the Virginians who need them most."

The 2025 Annual Report outlines several key initiatives launched or expanded during the year, including Operation STOP!, a targeted overdose prevention effort focused on communities experiencing rising overdose disparities, and the continued advancement of the Substance Use Data Analytics (SUDA) platform, the most comprehensive statewide system of its kind. Together, these efforts support equity-focused interventions, improved coordination, and evidence-based strategies across prevention, treatment, harm reduction and recovery.

The full 2025 Annual Report is available for download in the OAA newsroom, providing detailed insight into funding distributions, project outcomes and the OAA's priorities for the year ahead.

The OAA was established by the General Assembly in 2021 to oversee the distribution of 55% of Virginia's total settlement funds. Of the remainder, 30% is distributed directly to cities and counties, and the remaining 15% to the Commonwealth. The use of funds is restricted by court orders and state statute, with the restrictions requiring that funds be used for opioid abatement and remediation efforts.

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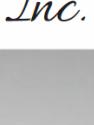
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Noise-induced hearing loss is permanent, but preventable



For more information, visit CDC.gov/NIOSH and AgriSafe.org.

From hairdryers to all-terrain vehicles, noise-induced hearing loss can spring from unexpected places.

"We need to remember that hearing loss is preventable, and we can do something about it," emphasized Charlotte Halverson, AgriSafe Network health coach and former clinical director.

AgriSafe is a national educational nonprofit that teaches healthcare professionals, farmers and ranchers about important agricultural health and safety topics.

With constant exposure to loud machinery, equipment and livestock, agriculture is listed in the top three occupations that cause hearing loss.

"I grew up on a farm, and we never thought about wearing hearing protection," Halverson recalled. "We didn't know what we didn't know."

She now lives with relentless ringing and chirping in her ears—a symptom of noise-induced hearing loss. It also can affect blood pres-

sure and pulse rate, and lead to depression, isolation, sleep disruptions and accidents.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration defines any noise level of 85 decibels or greater as dangerous.

"If you have to raise your voice to be heard by someone an arm's-length away from you, you're already experiencing hearing loss," Halverson cautioned.

The amount of hearing loss from noise exposure depends on the decibel level of the noise and the duration of exposure.

One minute with a chainsaw—reaching 120 dBA—"will put you in trouble," she noted.

Long exposures to lower noise intensities can still cause significant hearing loss—like power tools, ATVs, pressure washers, leaf blowers or push mowers.

"Hairdryers run at around 90 decibels," Halverson noted. "You don't think about that stuff. You

can see why hairstylists sometimes start losing their hearing."

She recommends downloading the free NIOSH Sound Level Meter app to help measure noise intensity.

Consumers can choose from a wide variety of protective canal caps, earplugs and earmuffs.

When selecting the appropriate hearing protection, it's important to consider AgriSafe's "5 C's of Hearing Protection":

Comfort is key to consistent use.

Compatibility with other safety equipment.

Convenience to use or access in environments with intermittent noise.

Communication frequency and the need to hear speech.

Cost and affordability.

It's crucial to check the hearing protection device's Noise Reduction Rating, stamped as "NRR" on the label, and calculate the level of noise protection outside of a perfect factory setting:

Subtract 7dB from the NRR.

Divide that number by two.

Subtract that number from the measured average noise of the task or machine.

Aim for just enough noise reduction to bring exposure down to 75-85 dBA.

Wearing two types of protection won't double your protection, but offers around five extra decibels of noise reduction.

"Unfortunately, once we start hearing ringing and buzzing in our ears, we are already experiencing significant hearing loss," Halverson said. "Don't be afraid to get a hearing test and see if you need hearing aids."

Halverson encourages organizations and businesses to help raise awareness of noise-induced hearing loss by leveraging the wealth of resources online.

"Older people will say, 'Had I only known,'" she remarked. "A lot of this information wasn't available 45 years ago, but it is now."

Soaring premiums force some Virginians to drop health coverage



According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, nearly 400,000 people in the Commonwealth enrolled in the ACA marketplace in 2025. (Adobe Stock)

By Zamone Perez
Virginia News Connection

The lapse of enhanced Affordable Care Act tax credits and rise in federal health insurance premiums have led more Virginians to opt out of coverage, and those who remain on the plans often pay more for less.

Rena Bumbray-Graves, a home caregiver in Woodbridge and member of the Service Employees International Union, faces hard decisions due to the increased costs. She went from paying around \$550 in monthly premiums to \$1,300. As a result, she has dropped her

plan in hopes of finding something more affordable.

Bumbray-Graves said the rising costs of monthly premiums, along with copays and prescription drugs, means she is rolling the dice on her financial and physical health.

"It made us very uncomfortable because, at the end of the day, if we can't find anything, the only option is to just go out of pocket and pray we don't get sick or anything," Bumbray-Graves explained.

President Donald

Trump has threatened to veto a potential three-year extension of tax credits which

passed the House and is under consideration in the Senate. Some Republicans in Congress want more spending cuts in exchange for a shorter extension of the health insurance credits.

Nearly 400,000 people in the Commonwealth buy insurance through the Affordable Care Act marketplace. Bumbray-Graves noted because of the increase in cost, she will have to put off care which could prevent small health problems from becoming larger ones.

"I will have to figure out whether I'm sick enough to go to the doctor. Or if I'm going to die, I have no choice but to go to the doctor," Bumbray-Graves emphasized. "I won't be able to just have physicals and checkups to make sure that my health doesn't decline. If I don't have those appointments, I won't find out I have something that is possibly preventive until it's too late."

A snapshot of Virginia's Affordable Care Act enrollment data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services suggested thousands of people will choose not to enroll or drop their plan this year.

somewhere else. There's a balancing act between the quality and the price."

Without tariffs and restrictions on selling tobacco, "we couldn't grow enough to meet the demand, because that is the quality of U.S. tobacco," he said.

Fifth-generation grower Adam Gregory in Pittsylvania County is a young farmer who started his own tobacco operation at Gregory Farms years after his dad took the federal buyout in 2004.

"I grew up around it and love this way of life—watching tobacco grow and working the land," he said. "It's just all I ever dreamed of doing."

Gregory started on 6.5 acres and has expanded to 110, with 22 box barns for conventional flue-cured tobacco.

Diversifying his buyer contracts helps Gregory find markets for his tobacco. Richmond-based Universal Corporation wants his bright, clean, lemon-style tobacco.

"And I'll have a barn of tobacco that's more orangey," Gregory explained. "Philip Morris loves that style of tobacco. So, no matter what, you have a home for it, and you're going to get top dollar!"

Read the full story in the January Virginia Farm Bureau News magazine.

Virginia growers cultivate top-quality tobacco desired by international buyers



Demand for Virginia-grown tobacco may have dipped over the decades, but grower efficiencies and commitment to quality keep the state's surviving operations profitable.

Over 8,400 Virginia farms were producing tobacco in 1992. Today, only 173 farms in Virginia are growing the historically iconic crop, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture. The 1998 Master Settlement Agreement and 2004 federal tobacco quota buyout pushed some growers into early retirement, while others transitioned to growing different crops.

Though acreage has dropped by almost half since the 2017 census to 12,634 acres, Virginia still ranks third nationally for tobacco production. The current generation of growers are building on centuries of expertise.

"Quality, quality, quality is how we stay in business," said Robert Mills, Pittsylvania County tobacco

grower and vice president of Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. "Efficiency is number one."

Virginia tobacco is mostly blended into premium quality cigarettes.

"We don't sell tobacco," Mills added. "We show people how to use U.S. leaf in their product. It'll cost them 50 cents more a pack to put 'U.S. leaf' on it, but now they have our premium product and can charge \$1.50 a pack more."

China is the world's largest tobacco consumer and global importer. U.S. trade with China is in a state of uncertainty due to ongoing trade tensions and escalating tariffs between the two countries.

"Virginia is recognized for growing the best tobacco in the world," said David Reed, Virginia Cooperative Extension tobacco agronomist in Blackstone. "We've got that to fall back on. And there's always demand for cigarette production. However, it's much more expensive for us to grow tobacco here than

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PATRICK PULPITS

A Trip Across the Desert

By Van Yandell

Matthew 2: 13 "And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

We are told in the scripture (Matthew 2), when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a star appeared to wise men in the east. Those wise men saw the star and followed it to Jerusalem seeking the Christ child.

"In the east" may have been in Israel or it may have been in the country we today know as Jordan or Iran (Persia or Babylon).

Considering their gifts, the wise men may possibly have come from Arabia.

Many have attempted to provide natural phenomenon such as a gathering of planets, to explain the star. This writer believes the star was a special, supernatural, one-time appearing object to guide the wise men to Jesus.

Matthew 2: 9 states emphatically the star "went before them and stood over the place where the child was." A celestial gathering of stars or planets would not have done this. The only reasonable explanation is that God provided the "star" for a guide.

I also am inclined to think the "guiding star" was in the atmosphere and not a star since we know stars to be light years away from earth.

In Jerusalem they enquired, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews for we have seen His star?"

Becoming aware of this, the king of Israel, Herod, was "troubled."

Sending for the priests and scribes Herod asked, "Where is this king to be born?" They answered his question with an Old Testament prophecy, Micah 5: 2. The king was to be born in Bethlehem.

Herod then sent the wise men to Bethlehem to find the child and return to him so he could go and worship Him as well. His ruse was intercepted by a dream in which the wise men were told of Herod's plan to kill the child and to "return to their own land by another route."

The trip from Jerusalem (Bethlehem is southeast about six miles) to Egypt would have been a very difficult journey. Since Mary had recently given birth to our Jesus and was nursing and caring for Him the conditions of the desert would have been excruciating.

We crossed that same Sinai Peninsula in an air conditioned bus. I well remember watching the blowing sand with the road appearing almost molten. Road graders

were placed along the highway at intervals because the drifting sand had to often be removed.

Scripture tells us they traveled "by night" and many assume that was to be in hiding. Being partially the case, the daytime conditions would have been too harsh for foot travel.

We do not know how long their journey took or where they lived for two years in Egypt. The distance from Rafah to Cairo is a little over 225 miles. Rafah is on the border of Israel and Egypt. The distance to Jerusalem is about 60 miles from Rafah making their journey almost 300 miles.

We also are not told where exactly in Egypt they stayed for two years. Their place of refuge was most likely in the Nile River delta area since the rest of Egypt is desert and not suitable for human habitation.

As extensive as the Holy Bible is, it leaves out a lot of the details. I suppose however it would have to be in volumes to answer even a part of our inquiries.

I've often wondered what the baby Jesus awareness may have been. The scripture tells us He was God in human form and the creator of all things (John 1: 1-3).

Therefore is it reasonable to think Jesus may have been aware as an infant of what was happening?

Research shows that the unborn fetus hears and responds to sounds outside the womb, such as language, music and loud sudden sounds. Expectant mothers have often reported that at sudden noises, their baby moved within them. A woman may not have the voice of an angel but her baby will love to hear her sing.

I can't avoid thinking Jesus was aware of His final destination, the cross of Calvary, during His lifetime. In such a case, Jesus' suffering would have been the mental anguish of knowing

His final hours before death would be nailed to a cross.

The sacrifice by God Jesus is so much more than we at times can begin to comprehend. For two years in Egypt and three years in His earthly ministry, Jesus was a homeless person.

Luke 9: 58 "And Jesus said unto him, foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath no where to lay his head."

We normally envision Jesus' suffering to be on the cross and of course that was the ultimate sacrifice for the souls of mankind. His shed blood and suffering gives us eternity and all He asks of us is to believe (John 3: 16).

To even begin to comprehend His anguish (Psalm 22), we must begin at His infantile years and possibly at His conception. We must also consider the suffering of Mary and Joseph in order to be the earthly parents of our Savior. They were foreigners in the strange land Egypt.

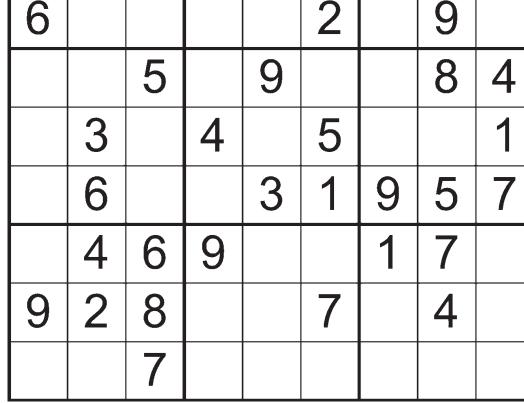
God of course, provided for them during those two years but what did Joseph do for his families' survival during that time? The life of Jesus and His parents is a witness of a supernatural presence.

A trip across the desert was just the beginning. What an ordeal that must have been! For their existence to have been placed in such an inhospitable place was a part of the misery they endured. And of course, after the two years they had to cross that same desert to return home.

Never under estimate the unpleasant existence of that family and our glorious Savior. Thankful is a place to begin but to realize and relate to their lives is an understanding we must have.

Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist and commissioned missionary. His email is vmy3451@gmail.com.

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. Is the book of Deborah (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. Which of these wasn't on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus? Peter, James, John, Andrew
3. From Matthew 13, how many of Jesus' "brothers" wrote books of the Bible? 0, 1, 2, 3
4. Which of these had 300 concubines? Pharaoh, King Solomon, Saul, Adam

5. What is the biblical interpretation of a concubine? Oven, Secondary wife, Chariot, Gold bracelet

6. In which city did King Ahasuerus mainly live? Corinth, Gath, Berea, Shushan

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Andrew, 3) Two (James and Jude), 4) King Solomon, 5) Secondary wife, 6) Shushan



Skyline Pentecostal Holiness Church

1515 Rock Church Rd.

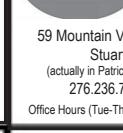
Meadows of Dan, Virginia

Rev. Tommy Gosnell

CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday School 10 am

Worship Services 11 am



Risen Lord
Catholic Church

Mass Schedule

Sundays at 8:30 a.m.

Reconciliation

Sundays 7:45 - 8:15 a.m.

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Super Crossword

U.K. PLAY

ACROSS	61	Big name in dog food	106	June bugs, by another name	11	Music genre for TLC	56	Cleaning tool in a bucket	97	Last letter
	63	Born	110	Poetic "always"	12	Chachi's last name on "Happy Days"	57	Muscle jerk	98	'16 Olympics
	64	TV announcer	111	Yule songs	13	Mao — tung	58	More citrusy, say	99	site
	65	Don Riddle	112	Post-teen	14	Free TV ad, for short	60	Mary Lou of gymnastics	100	Flowering
	66	Strep-treating doc	113	Squeaks (out)	15	Drink inserts	62	One suffering for a belief	101	Small dress size
	67	Person giving out prizes	116	Ticked (off)	16	Target of antiperspirant	63	Atom studier	102	Cowboy's whoop
	68	Eight of their last names are featured in this puzzle	118	Spring back	17	Minimal	64	Bohr	104	pot (sinus cleaner)
	69	Unisom rival	120	Kentucky Derby venue	18	Bordeaux wine	65	Leb. neighbor	105	Early tourney round
	70	Passing vote	126	"Little Women"	19	Secret store	66	911 gp.	106	Safin who won tennis
	71	Gridiron stats	127	Wanness	20	Grads' event	67	Susan of "Spring Fever"	2000 U.S. Open	
	72	Punctual	128	Cry upon getting there	21	Fictional Scarlett	68	Orange — New Black"	107	She sang the hit "Hello"
	73	Sominex or Unisom rival	129	Joined (up)	22	Plan a new route for	69	"Hello"	108	New Mexico's state flower
	74	Passing vote	130	Baby hoisters	31	Cushy class	70	Artificial silk	109	Brain protector
	75	As many as	131	Vain person's lack	32	Mel the Giant	71	Orange — New Black"	110	Stanley Gardner
	76	Big lamb cut	132	With	33	Jokester	72	Midleg joints	111	"Nae" sayer
	77	Big lamb cut	133	22-Across, film "nightmare" locale	34	Solo	73	Midleg joints	112	Muppet
	78	Gridiron stats	134	Teachers' gp.	35	Mosque officiant	74	Thoughts	113	Inc., abroad
	79	Gridiron stats	135	3 — Mahal	36	Streaming set-top box	75	Taken with	114	Div. of days
	80	Passing vote	136	4 Equal: Prefix	37	Viral misery	80	"Two Guys and —"	115	Lyric verse
	81	As many as	137	5 Walloped	38	Soft throws	81	Operated	116	Craven
	82	Big lamb cut	138	6 Foliage bit	39	42 — out!" (ump's call)	82	In flames	117	Hog hangout
	83	Common allergy trigger	139	7 Barcelona's land, to natives	40	46 — Death Be Not Proud" poet	83	Courteous	118	Reverend
	84	Condiment spicier than its yellow cousin	140	8 Bud	41	47 — out!" (ump's call)	84	Midleg joints	119	Inc., abroad
	85	On — with (similar to)	141	9 Director Kazan	42	48 Avant —	85	Sheriff Taylor's tyke	120	U.S. Navy
	86	Common weed of	142	10 Plus others: Abr.	43	49 Mandate	86	88 Mess-free to court	121	Div. of noncom
	87	members of it	143							

CLASSIFIED

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All real estate advertised in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitations or discrimination based on race, color, sex or national origin," or an intention to make any such preferences, limitations 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, January 28, 2026 - 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.)

Meetings

Friday, Jan. 30

The Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) will have a board retreat from 12-3 p.m. in the Patrick & Henry Community College community room.

Monday, Feb. 9

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

Thursday, Feb. 12

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

Events

Thursday, Feb. 5

DMV Connect will be inside Patrick & Henry Community College, 212 Wood Brothers Dr., Stuart, from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Closed for lunch from 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 6

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

Saturday, Feb. 7

Jeb Stuart Rescue Squad will hold its monthly community breakfast, 7:30 -10 a.m. Plates are \$10. Dine in, carryout, and curb service available. Call 276-694-6171 to place an order.

Meadows of Dan Women's Club BINGO, Meadows of Dan Community Center. Doors open at 5 p.m. Games start at 6. Food will be available for sale. For more information, call 404-401-0064

Wednesday, Feb. 11

The Patrick County Food Bank will be open from 8:30-11 a.m. and from 5-6:30 p.m. at its Stuart location, from 8-10 a.m. at Fellowship Church in Ararat, and at 5:30 p.m. until out of boxes at the Meadows of Dan Community Building.

Saturday, Feb. 14

Free program, "Living with Black Bears in Virginia," will be presented by Norma Bozenmyer at the Patrick County Library at 11 a.m. Suitable for all ages. Registration not required.

Thursday, Feb. 19

The Patrick County Republican Committee will meet at 6 p.m. in the Motorsports Hall of Fame Auditorium, 212 Wood Brothers Dr., Stuart.

Friday, Feb. 20

The community food pantry will be at the Fairystone Volunteer Fire Department from 3-4 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 21

Adam Murphy, one of the two Democratic candidates running in a primary to unseat Morgan Griffith, will be at the Patrick County Democratic meeting, 10:30 a.m., Patrick County Library.

Ongoing

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 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.

P&HCC unveils President's List for Fall 2025

Many local students were named to Patrick & Henry Community College's President's List for fall 2025.

Students enrolled in at least 6 non-developmental credits and who earn a semester grade point average of 3.8 or higher are placed on the President's List.

Ararat: Autumn Leighann Brown, Jeni Lakin Crosby, Lacey Denise Easter, Callie Elyse Montgomery, Virginia Nelson Nations, Alyssa Dawn Overby

Claudville: Tristan Cox, Abigail Marie Epperson, Caleb Elliot Goins, Addisyn Susanne Hall, David Larry Lawson

Critz: Kristen Harris, LeMia Lemons

Meadows of Dan: Hannah Claire Ingalls,

Kyra Ingalls, Brycen Delano Lewis, Clara LeAndra Thorman, Paige L. Whitt, Xena Wilcox, Benton Nash Wood, Callie Wood, Kathryn Hope Wood

Patrick Springs: Rachel Grace Bishop, William Laine Errichetti, James Riley Hodges, Gavin Dwayne Kendrick, Steven Marion, Rocky Marcel Nelson, Samantha Frances Nester, Angel Faith Plaster, Mary Jane Quesenberry, Rylee Rae Soliday, Emily Nicole Trent

Stuart: Ashley Michelle Barnes, Jack Greene Blaylock, Kylei Paige Blevins, Eli Wade Bogle, Abigail Bryant, Lilieann Shauntay Butler, Lillian Jane Byers, Sasha Nicole Campos-Pineda, Cheyenne Elizabeth Clifton, Lillian Annette Cobbler, Cameron Lee Collins, Taylor Grey Col-

lins, Haley Abigail Day, Ashley Faith Fleming, Rachel Leah Gates, Adin Jonas Geiger, Camille Beatriz Gonzalez, Kyle Bradley Handy, Richard Gauge Hazlewood, Sydney Lynn Hopkins, Eyan Henry Johnson, Avone Nicoli Kidd, Kylene Jesse Leonard, Jacob Ellis Lester, Emma Madeya, Ashley Lauren Martin, Fisher Randall Martin, Hunter Randall Martin, Draysin Maselli, Raeli Adrianna Moran, Haley MacKenzie Rakes, Nathan Allen Register, Parker Kayden Roop, Anna Bella Susan Russo, Madison Grace Scott, Alexia Rae Shuff, Emily Ruth Shuff, Vishal Somasundaram, Mark Trail, Wyatt Alexander Westmoreland, Bridgette Faith Whitney, Lauren Worley

Woolwine: Johnathan Macoy Harbour, Elias Caleb Quisenberry, Andrew Joseph Tackett.

P&HCC announces Honors List

Patrick & Henry Community College's (P&HCC's) Honor List for Fall 2025 was recently released.

Students enrolled in at least 6 non-developmental credits and who earn a semester grade point average of 3.2 or higher are placed on the Honors List.

Ararat: Aubreigh Rose Large, Lacey Alene Sutphin

Claudville: Jaxon Dallas Ayers-Rosas, Jackson Douglas Sanders Barbour, Aiden Chace Handy, Hali Renay Napier, Kason Lee Pinnix

Critz: Kristen Lynn Bouldin, Haley K. Gilispie, Aaliyah Marie Reynolds

Meadows of Dan: Eli James Wood

Patrick Springs: Anna Maria Arellano, Jonathan Darrell Branch, Dylan Reed Cruise,

Kimberly JoAnne Fitzgerald, Natalie Kate Hancock, Dakota Zane Tankersley, Mackenzie Cheyanne Underwood, Josilene MacKenzie Williams, Lauryn Marie Williams

Spencer: Arianna Jael Bokman, Cameron Dwayne Cassell, Alysha Brooke Copening, Kursten Lynette Hylton, Avery Jaleel Niblett, Jacqueline B. Thurman

Stuart: Joshua Olin Wesley Bell, Jordan Leigh Biggs, Rachel Branch, Lucinda Brown, Erica Lynn Cipko, Kayla Corns, Taylor Lee Edwards, Hunter Heath, Will Allan Heath, Zachary Paul Holt, Jaheim Roosevelt Johnson, Jada Alise Knott, Jude Galyean Martin, Reyli Alejandro Martinez-Tejeda, Nubia Penn, Angel T. Redd, Andrea Mae Smith, Stephen Cosley Spencer, Erik Stump, Jaiden Parker Wilson.

Thank you for reading
The Enterprise

Super Crossword

Answers

E	N	T	I	T	L	E	P	E	R	A	T	P	S	A	L	M	S
L	E	A	S	H	E	S	S	A	L	T	A	R	S	S	T	R	E
M	A	J	O	R	A	P	P	L	I	A	N	C	E	A	R	M	A
A	F	A	R	A	L	D	O	A	P	S	O	S	S	O	S	O	S
O	R	E	O	S	N	O	W	B	L	A	I	R	W	T	U	W	U
H	E	A	T	H	F	A	M	Y	A	L	M	O	S	T	T	U	U
A	M	S	T	E	L	T	E	O	D	O	A	K	G	O	O	O	O
A	P	A	R	I	A	M	S	N	E	E	P	A	R	D	O	O	O
B	R	I	E	N	I	G	M	A	E	N	T	A	W	A	R	D	R
E	A	T	I	S	H	P	R	I	M	E	M	I	N	S	T	E	R
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N	Y	T	O	L	A	Y	E	U	P	T	O	R	A	C	K	K	K
J	O	N	S	O	N	G	R	A	S	S	O	N	E	G	F	I	I
I	N	E	P	E	I	S	U	Z	A	R	V	I	E	F	I	I	I
M	A	Y	E	B	E	T	T	L	E	S	E	E	N	O	E	S	S
A	D	U	L	T	E	E	K	E	S	T	E	E	D	O	O	O	O
R	E	C	O	I	L	C	H	U	R	C	H	I	L	D	O	O	O
A	L	C	O	T	T	P	A	L	L	O	R	I	M	A	D	E	I
T	E	A	M	E	D	D	W	L	E	T	S	M	O	D	E	Y	T

2	8	1	5	4	9	7	3	6
7	9	4	6	8	3	5	1	2
6	5	3	7	1	2	4	9	8
1	7	5	2	9	6	3	8	4
8	3	9	4	7	5	2	6	1
4	6	2	8	3	1	9	5	7
3	4	6	9	2	8	1	7	5
9	2	8	1	5	7	6	4	3
5	1	7	3	6	4	8	2	9



Don't let your grassed waterways become an afterthought

By Eric Hange

Grassed waterways are a familiar sight on many farms, quietly doing their job year after year. Because they often blend into the landscape, it can be easy to overlook just how important they are to protecting your soil, your yields and your long-term productivity.

Grassed waterways are an excellent erosion control tool, but it is just as important to understand their limitations, expected lifespan and the maintenance they require to continue functioning as intended.

At their core, grassed waterways are designed to safely convey water through a field. During heavy rain events, water naturally accumulates and accelerates as it moves downhill.

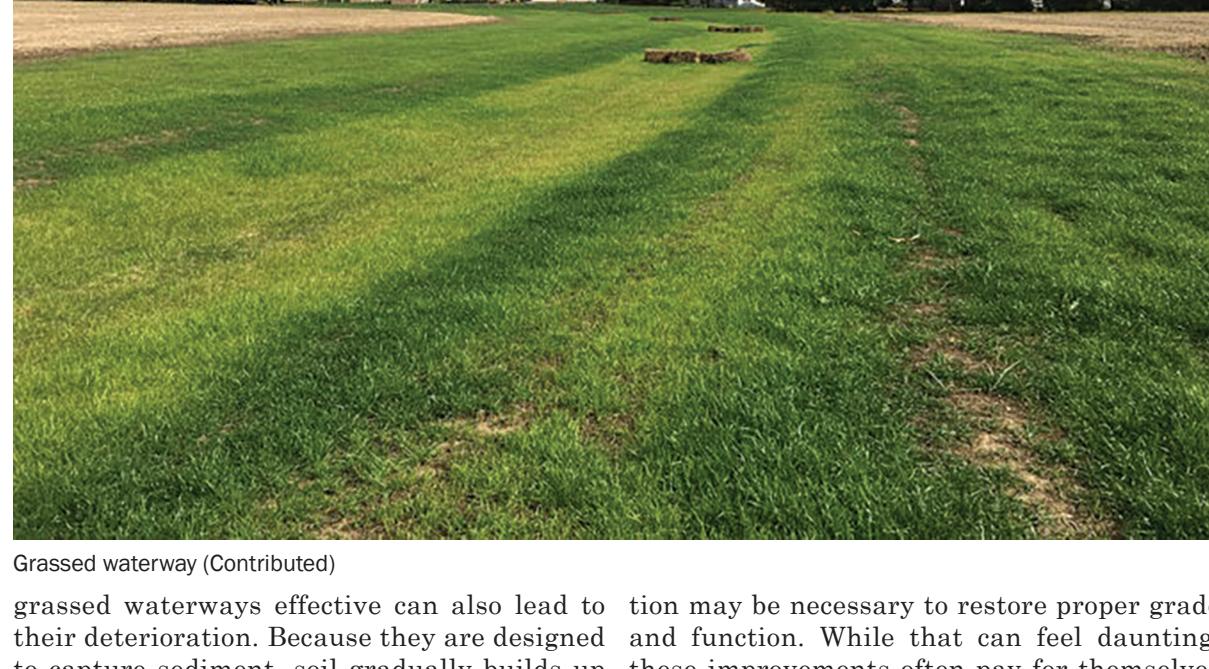
Without a designated outlet, that concentrated flow can cut gullies, carry away valuable topsoil and create problems that worsen with each storm. A properly designed and maintained grassed waterway slows that water down, spreads it out and protects the soil surface from erosion.

The strength of a grassed waterway lies in its root system. Dense, established vegetation holds soil in place while allowing water to pass through the center of the channel.

As water flows, sediment is captured and trapped by the grass rather than being carried off the field. This process helps keep soil where it belongs and reduces the amount of sediment that leaves the field and enters downstream ditches, streams, and waterways.

However, grassed waterways are not a forever solution. Under typical conditions, they have an expected life span of around 30 years. In some cases, that life expectancy can be longer, depending on factors such as slope, soil type, rainfall intensity and farming practices used in the surrounding field. Reduced tillage, residue cover and careful equipment operation can all help extend the usable life of a waterway.

Over time, the very function that makes



Grassed waterway (Contributed)

grassed waterways effective can also lead to their deterioration. Because they are designed to capture sediment, soil gradually builds up within the waterway.

This sediment accumulation often occurs at the edge where the grass meets the cropped field. As soil continues to settle there, the edge slowly rises in elevation, creating what is sometimes referred to as a "micro dam."

When this happens, water no longer flows smoothly down the center of the grassed waterway as intended. Instead, runoff runs parallel to the raised edges and travels down both sides of the waterway.

Once water stops entering the waterway, exposed soil on the edges will often erode. These side channels can quickly cut into the field and make the waterway ineffective as an erosion control practice.

The good news is that regular maintenance and timely repairs can significantly extend the life of a grassed waterway. Periodic inspections after large rain events are a good place to start. Look for signs that water is no longer flowing through the center: bare spots in the vegetation, rills forming along the edges or areas where sediment has clearly built up. Addressing these issues early is far easier and less costly than waiting until the waterway has failed.

Maintenance may include reshaping the waterway, removing excess sediment, re-establishing vegetation or reinforcing areas that receive the most flow.

In some cases, a full revamp or reconstruc-

tion may be necessary to restore proper grade and function. While that can feel daunting, these improvements often pay for themselves by preventing ongoing soil loss and protecting the rest of the field.

Producers should also know they are not alone when dealing with grassed waterway concerns. Your county's soil and water conservation district is often the best first call. SWCD staff can help evaluate what is happening in the field, discuss potential solutions, and connect landowners with technical and financial resources.

In many situations, cost-share assistance may be available or other conservation initiatives may help offset the cost of installing, repairing or upgrading grassed waterways. Availability and eligibility vary, but these programs are designed to support farmers who are working to protect their soil and water resources.

Grassed waterways remain one of the most practical and effective tools for managing concentrated runoff and erosion on farmland. With realistic expectations, good farming practices and proactive maintenance, they can continue doing their job for decades. Paying attention to small warning signs today can help ensure your grassed waterways remain an asset well into the future.

Please contact the Patrick County Soil and Water Conservation District office at 276-694-2911 to schedule a field visit or stop by the Patrick SWCD office, located at 104 Via Avenue in Stuart.

LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWN OF STUART PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

The Town of Stuart Planning Commission will hold a meeting on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 5:00 PM in the Stuart Town Office, located at 100 Patrick Avenue, Stuart, Virginia.

The purpose of the meeting is to consider matters related to the Zoning Ordinance and other business properly brought before the Commission.

All interested persons are invited to attend. Those unable to attend who wish to provide comments may contact Bryce Simmons, Town Manager, by phone at (276) 694-3811 or by email at bryce.simmons@stuartva.org.

LEGAL

RFP 2026-MNT-001

The Patrick County School Board is accepting competitive sealed proposals from licensed contractors for Excavating and Site Preparation for a future Multipurpose Building/Wrestling Building at Patrick County High School, 215 Cougar Lane, Stuart, VA 24171. RFP electronic file plans are available from the Architect's office (88knight@comcast.net) or School Maintenance Office, Chad Haynes (chad.haynes@patrick.k12.va.us). Proposals will be received on Thursday, February 12, 2026, on or before 2:00 p.m. at the Patrick County School Board Office, 132 North Main Street, Stuart, VA 24171, and results will be read aloud. A pre-bid conference will be Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at Patrick County High School. All interested contractors attending the pre-bid conference must check in at the high school main office.

LEGAL

The Patrick County Board of Supervisors reminds all pet owners that Virginia law requires all dogs four (4) months of age or older to be vaccinated against rabies. Dogs kept on the owner's premises must also be properly licensed in accordance with Patrick County Ordinance. Owners are required to retain the rabies vaccination certificate and present it upon request by an officer.

Dog licenses are available through the Patrick County Treasurer's Office, located on the second floor of the Patrick County Veterans' Memorial Building in Stuart, Virginia. To purchase a license, owners must present a current, unexpired rabies vaccination certificate and pay the required license tax.

A lifetime dog license is available for a fee of \$20.00. The lifetime tag is valid for the life of the dog, provided the dog's rabies vaccination remains current. If the rabies vaccination expires, the lifetime tag becomes void. In such cases, the dog must be re-vaccinated and a new lifetime tag purchased. Lifetime tags are non-transferable and are not valid in other localities.

For questions regarding dog licenses, please contact the Treasurer's Office at (276) 694-7257.

Beginning February 1, 2026, compliance with dog licensing requirements will be enforced by the Animal Control Officer. Owners who have not yet purchased licenses for their dogs are encouraged to do so prior to February 1.

All cats are also required to be vaccinated against rabies; however, no license is required for cats.

All pet owners are urged to comply with these regulations.

LEGAL

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, 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 Mortgagee 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

ABC NOTICE

HaynesPerry LLC trading as Longfin Grill, 329 W. Blue Ridge Street, Stuart, Patrick County, Stuart, Virginia 24171-1530.

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

Richard L. Perry, partner

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

LEGAL

ABC NOTICE

Naan Stop Inc. trading as Naan Stop, 112 and 114 N Main St, Stuart, Patrick County, Stuart, Virginia 24171.

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Retail Restaurant Application - Wine, Beer, Consumed On and Off Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

Pranav Balh - Owner

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

LEGAL

Redesigned website designed to enhance user experience

The Virginia General Assembly's newly redesigned website was announced last week. The redesigned site offers a more intuitive user experience, faster navigation, and exclusive content designed to better inform citizens. The new – and shorter – web address is: vga.virginia.gov.

The launch of the new website is the first of several initiatives coming this year aimed at increasing public access, awareness and engagement with the Virginia General Assembly and the Virginia State Capitol. It incorporates a clean, modern design with improved functionality and searchability. Information is organized into four categories: Visit, Engage, About and Learn.

New features of the website include:

- **Intuitive Navigation:** A user-friendly layout that allows for quick access to key information.
- **Mobile Responsiveness:** Fully optimized for viewing on all devices, including smartphones and tablets.
- **Full ADA compliancy:** Website meets the Web Content Accessibil-

ity Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standard, providing equal digital access for people with disabilities.

• **Improved Online Content:** Some of the many new features of the revamped website include: a virtual tour of the Capitol Building; enhanced online schedules; and improved information for tourists, engaged citizens and students.

"We are committed to providing citizens with the best possible tools and resources so that they may engage with their government," said G. Paul Nardo, Clerk of the House of Delegates. "We believe our new website will be a better and more valuable asset for everyone we serve."

"Virginia's Capitol is an historic landmark visited by thousands every month," said Susan Clarke Schaar, Clerk of the Senate of Virginia. "The new website will more effectively assist visitors as they plan their visit to our beautiful Capitol and Capitol Square, and so much more."

To learn more, visit www.vga.virginia.gov.

LEGAL

TRUSTEE SALE

119 Park Street, Stuart, VA 24171

In execution of the Deed of Trust dated February 21, 2020, in the original principal amount of \$85,858.00, recorded as Inst. 200000308, assigned at Inst. 250002249, in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court for the County of Patrick, Virginia, default having occurred in the payment of the indebtedness thereby secured and at the request of the holder of the note, the undersigned, as Substitute Trustee, either of whom may act, will sell at public auction at the front entrance of the Circuit Court for the County of Patrick on February 26, 2026, at 1:30 p.m., the property located at the above address and described as Lot 1, as shown on plat recorded in Plat Book 1, page 68, County of Patrick. TERMS: CASH. PROPERTY SOLD AS IS WITH SPECIAL WARRANTY OF TITLE. A deposit of \$10,000.00 or the successful bid amount (whichever is lower) will be required immediately of the successful bidder, in cashier's check or certified funds only payable to or signed over to "DOLANREID PLLC, TRUSTEE", no personal checks accepted. Balance is due within 15 days from date of sale VIA BANKWIRE ONLY. Sale is subject to post sale confirmation and audit of the status of the loan including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower filed for and obtained bankruptcy protection, entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, or if trustee is unable to complete the sale, or if it is set aside or not fully completed for any reason except purchaser's default, the sale shall be null and void, and the purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. Upon purchaser's default, the deposit shall be forfeited and the property resold at the risk and costs of the defaulting purchaser. Sale is subject to all prior liens, easements, restrictions, covenants, reservations and conditions, if any, of record, as well as inchoate liens and any other matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or inspection of the premises. Real estate taxes will be adjusted to the date of sale. All costs of conveyance, deed, examination of title, recording charges, grantor's tax and possession will be at the expense of the purchaser. All risks of casualty immediately pass to the successful bidder. Time is of the essence. Winning bidder must sign a memorandum of sale immediately upon completion of sale. Additional terms may be announced at the time of sale. Trustee's affidavit and a copy of the notice of sale available at the foreclosure sale. The opening bid is not announced until the sale. Current sale status available at dolanreid.com/foreclosure-sales.

THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

For Information Contact: DolanReid PLLC and G. Benny Moore, Substitute Trustee(s)

12610 Patrick Henry Dr., Ste. D, Newport News, VA 23602; (757) 320-0255, Ext. 220 or Ext. 260



Firefighter of the Year - Alex Pegram



Special Award - Bradley Lawless



Iron Man - John West and Jonathan Wilson



Community Supporter of the Year - Clark Gas and Oil



Special Dedication - Terry Tilley (left center), and Christopher Corbett, (right center)



Top 10 Call Runners - Jonathan Wilson, John West, Austin Bryant, Blair Clark, Alex Pegram, Bradley Lawless, Terri Mills, Ivan Byers, Terry Dalton, Danial Trail



Membership of Stuart Fire

SVFD honors members at annual awards banquet

The Stuart Volunteer Fire Department recently recognized the dedication and service of its members during its annual awards banquet held on January 16, 2026. The event celebrated the hard work, commitment, and accomplishments of our volunteer firefighters and community supporters who went above and beyond in service during 2025.

This year's award recipients included:

- Firefighter of the Year - Alex Pegram
- Iron Man (most calls run) - Jonathan Wilson & John West
- Community Supporter of the Year - Clark Gas & Oil
- Special Award Winner - Bradley Lawless
- Top 10 Call Runners - Jonathan Wilson, John West, Austin Bryant, Blair Clark, Alex Pegram, Bradley Lawless, Terri

Mills, Ivan Byers, Terry Dalton, Danial Trail

- Special Dedication - Dedication of a new stationary compressor for filling SCBA to Terry Tilley and Christopher Corbett

For more information about the Stuart Volunteer Fire Department or how to volunteer, visit its Facebook page or come by the station during our meetings, every Thursday at 7 p.m.

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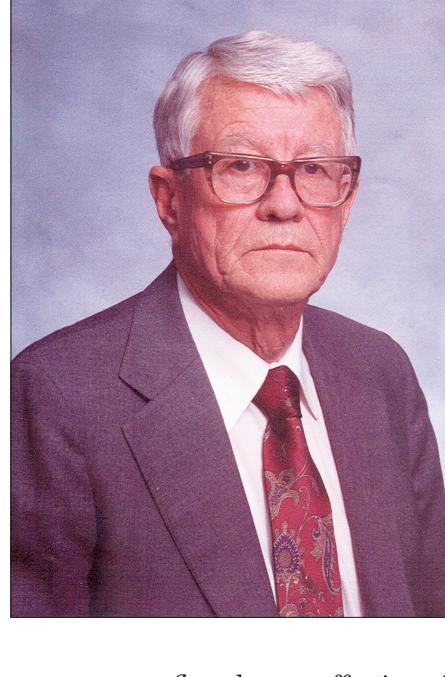
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STAY UP TO DATE ON LOCAL NEWS

Laurel Hill's Many Histories: Dr. Wilburn Eric Jarrell



Albert Harvey Jarrell



Dr. Jarrell with Theodore Guynn

By Tom Perry

Many people called the land once owned by the Stuarts after they left Patrick County in 1859. Many of those who followed left their mark on the land that was once the Laurel Hill Farm. One of those was Dr. Eric Jarrell.

Wilburn Eric Jarrell was born to Benjamin Alec and Mary Alma Hancock Jarrell in Floyd, Virginia, on March 14, 1926. Benjamin met Mary while they were both students at Central Academy in Patrick County. W. Eric Jarrell had eight siblings: Merlin Thomas, Mary Claudine, John Arnold, Joseph William, Franklin Delano, Charles Burgess, Dallas Gray, and Lilly Aleene Jarrell.

Jarrell descended from Joseph William Jarrell and his father, Albert Jarrell, who was among four brothers who served the South in the War Between the States. Albert lived on land once owned by J. E. B. Stuart's father, Archibald, and often visited William Mitchell at the 1905 Mitchell-Dellenback house.

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 exchanged in February 1865. He married Jane Tickle. Many of his descendants still live in the area, including world-famous Bluegrass musician Tommy Jarrell and his great-grandson, Dr. Eric Jarrell.

W. Eric Jarrell attended J. E. B. Stuart School in the Rabbit Ridge Section of Ararat and later Blue Ridge High School. Jarrell wanted to

fly planes off aircraft carriers during World War Two, but entered the U. S. Navy on May 12, 1944, and traveled to Williamsburg's Camp Perry. He joined the Medical Corps, attending three months of intense training at Bainbridge, Maryland, and then to Portsmouth Naval Hospital and to Hawaii. Jarrell served on the U. S. S. Cecil, an amphibious transport ship (APA) that carried 1500 men to Iwo Jima. They continued to the New Hebrides, Caroline, Cook, and Solomon Islands. For one week, Jarrell witnessed Kamikazes attack the navy at Okinawa and the flag-raising on Mount Suribachi. He spent six months at Tientsin, China, taking care of the Marine Air Corps, and considered becoming a dentist, but since he had already covered everything eight years of college would teach in Dentistry, he turned to medicine instead. He left the Navy as Pharmacist Mate Third Class on June 11, 1946.

After Dr. Jarrell retired, I often accompanied my friend Theodore Guynn to visit his old friend. They graduated from Blue Ridge High School together, a class that included Emily Culler, daughter of Carrie Sue Bondurant Culler. Eric, Theodore, and I sat around the Jarrell kitchen table, and I just listened to the two of them talk. Both men served in the United States Navy during World War II. Theodore served on the USS Princeton, an aircraft carrier in the Atlantic Ocean, and Eric served as a Marine Medic listed above.

From September 1946 until 1950, Eric attended the University of Virginia and then spent four years in medical school in Charlottesville. After one year of internship, Dr. W. Eric Jarrell returned to Ararat, worked off his rural scholarship, and began a 43-year career in medicine. He

worked to get a Medical Examiner system in Surry County. He took over Dr. Gates' practice and later moved to Mount Airy, where his office was on North Main Street. He retired on November 9, 1998, and is the rare Ararat native to be named a Distinguished Patrick Countian. My cousin, Dr. Todd Perry, took over Dr. Jarrell's practice.

W. E. Jarrell married Jewel Beatrice Davis, the daughter of Clyde Stephen and Edith Beatrice Earnhart Davis. The couple had four children. W. E. Jarrell, Jr., born in 1954, died tragically in a car accident. David Hancock was born in 1961, Beverly Jewel in 1956, and Susan Beatrice in 1963. Beverly married Roger S. William, and their oldest child, Leslie Erica, attended the University of Virginia and was a Presidential Scholar. They had two other children: Roger, Jr., and Logan Beatrice. Davis H. Jarrell married Teresa Ercoline and had two children, Davis, Jr., and Anne Abram Jarrell.

After Eric passed away, I found myself at Ridgecrest Retirement Center on North Main Street in Mount Airy. I often gave history talks to the residents. On this particular day, I found myself in the presence of the ladies I like to call the "Grand Dams," including Betty Blackmon, of Siamese Twin fame; Betty Lynn, who was Thelma Lou on The Andy Griffith Show; and Jewel Jarrell, wife of Doctor Jarrell. Jewell approached me that day and told me how much she appreciated the times I came to visit the Doctor with Theodore Guynn and how much Eric appreciated someone interested in his history. They are all gone now, and I appreciate their willingness to share their history with me. Always find the oldest people you know and talk to them, you will never be sorry about what you learn about Laurel Hill's Many Histories.

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Patrick County Office
276-694-2239



SPECIAL Senior Citizen EDITION

Early action can stop prediabetes in seniors

Type 2 diabetes is a serious condition that affects millions of people worldwide, including a growing number of older adults. In the United States, more than 37 million people are living with diabetes, and an estimated 90 to 95 percent of those cases are type 2 diabetes.

As people age, the risk of developing type 2 diabetes increases. The condition occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin or does not use insulin effectively. Without proper management, diabetes can lead to complications affecting the heart, kidneys, nerves, eyes and circulation.

Before diabetes develops, many people experience a condition known as prediabetes. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, prediabetes means blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be classified as diabetes. While it may sound mild, prediabetes should not be ignored, particularly for seniors, as it increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and nerve damage.

One challenge with prediabetes



For seniors, early awareness and consistent medical care are essential. Understanding prediabetes provides an opportunity to protect long-term health and maintain independence through informed, manageable steps.

is that it often causes no noticeable symptoms. The Mayo Clinic notes that one possible sign — darkened skin on areas such as the neck, armpits or groin — may be subtle and easily overlooked. Because symptoms are rare, many people remain unaware of their condition. The Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about 80 percent of people with prediabetes do not know they have it.

For older adults, routine medical care plays a key role in detection. Regular physical exams and blood tests allow physicians to identify rising blood sugar levels

early, when action can be most effective. The CDC defines prediabetes as a fasting blood sugar level between 100 and 125 milligrams per deciliter. A level of 126 mg/dL or higher typically indicates diabetes.

The encouraging news is that prediabetes does not have to progress to diabetes. In many cases, lifestyle adjustments can slow or even reverse the condition.

Doctors often recommend:

Adopting healthier habits: Modest weight loss, regular physical activity and improved nutrition can significantly reduce diabetes risk. Even light exercise, such as walking, can make a difference.

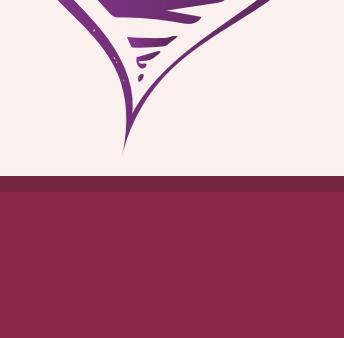
Following medical guidance:

In some cases, medications may be prescribed to help manage blood sugar levels.

Managing stress: Chronic stress can affect hormone levels and blood sugar control. Relaxation techniques, hobbies and social engagement may help.

Quitting smoking: Smoking increases the risk of diabetes and related complications, especially in older adults.

KNOW THE SIGNS! SAVE A LIFE



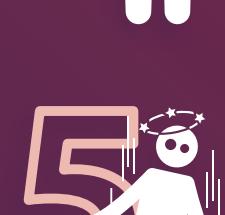
SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK



Pressure or squeezing in the center of the chest



Shortness of breath



Shooting pain through shoulders, arms, neck or jaw



Heartburn, nausea or indigestion-like pain



Dizziness, fainting or sudden abnormal sweating



Extreme fatigue or exhaustion



Always call 911 when you feel any combination of these symptoms. Do not wait or try to drive yourself to the hospital.

* Women may experience signs that may not be as easy to recognize, such as fatigue or feeling flu-like symptoms.

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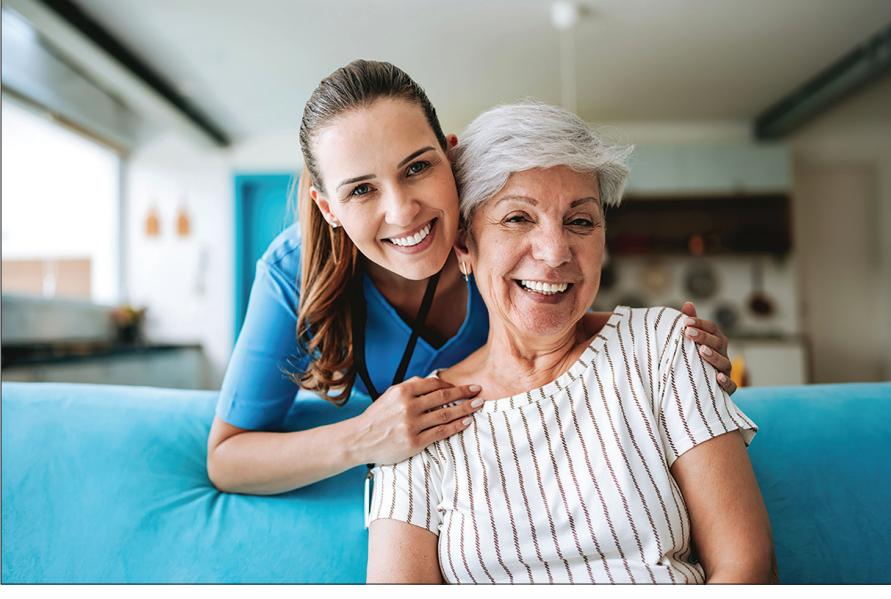
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Palliative care is an option for those facing serious illnesses. It is designed to help manage symptoms from the illness itself or the side effects of treatment.

The goal of palliative care

Medical care often falls into two umbrella categories: curative and illness management. Palliative care belongs to the second category because it focuses on improving the quality of life for those with serious or life-threatening illnesses and is not designed to cure or eradicate an underlying condition. The World Health Organization says an estimated 56.8 million people, including 25.7 million in the last year of life, require palliative care each year. However, worldwide, only about 14 percent of people who need palliative care currently receive it.

What does palliative care do?

Palliative care can improve the quality of life of patients and their families who are facing challenges associated with life-threatening illnesses. Palliative care is offered alongside other treatments a person may receive. The Mayo Clinic says palliative care largely involves managing pain and other symptoms of a serious illness. It also can help one cope with side effects from medical treatments. Palliative care does not depend on whether or not the condition can be cured.

Is palliative care hospice care?

Palliative care and hospice care are not one and the same. In fact, hospice care is a type of palliative care that focuses exclusively on patients who are expected to live for six months or less. Palliative care can be offered to patients with serious illnesses at any stage.

Who is palliative care for?

Just about any person suffering from a serious, prolonged illness can benefit from palliative care. The Cleveland Clinic notes people with these conditions may benefit from palliative care.

- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
- Alzheimer's disease
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease
- Cystic fibrosis
- HIV/AIDS
- Kidney disease
- Lung diseases like emphysema
- Multiple sclerosis (MS)
- Parkinson's disease
- Stroke

Who offers palliative care?

Teams of professionals provide palliative care. A care team can consist of doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, social workers, and spiritual advisors.

Which conditions can palliative care help with?

Patients may receive palliative care to assist with symptoms of depression, pain, fatigue, constipation, nausea, difficulty sleeping, anxiety, and much more, according to the organization Get Palliative Care.

When does palliative care end?

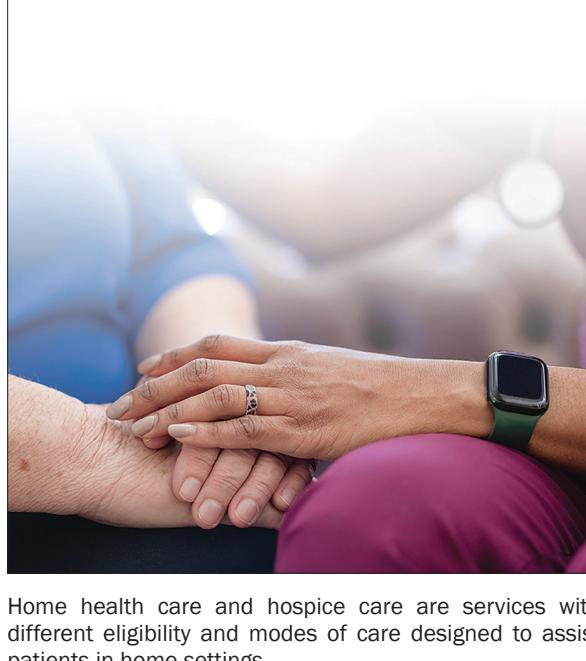
There is no time limit on palliative care; it can last as long as the patient requires and is exhibiting symptoms suggesting care can help.

What distinguishes home care from hospice care

Hospitals are in the business of treating patients and helping them overcome injuries and illnesses. In many instances, hospitals offer unparalleled care. However, hospitals are not always without risk, and sometimes are not the most comfortable places for their patients, particularly those recovering from injuries or facing end of life.

Fluorescent lights, beeping machine monitors and 24-hour personnel conversing at all hours of the day can disrupt natural sleep patterns. Hospital patients may be woken at night for status checks and to draw blood. Staff shortages may mean some patients become lower priority and do not receive much individualized attention. Medication mistakes and hospital-acquired infections also are risks that patients take when they are admitted to a hospital. Many people would prefer an alternative, if possible, particularly if they have a serious illness to recover from or a terminal condition. Some individuals may be eligible for home-based care.

People may mistakenly think that home care and hospice care are one and the same. In fact, home care and hospice are two distinct services that provide support to individuals with serious conditions. They share similarities, but they differ in goals



Home health care and hospice care are services with different eligibility and modes of care designed to assist patients in home settings.

and eligibility.

Home care

The main scope of home health care is curative. The goal is to help a patient recover from a surgery, injury or illness, according to Vitas Healthcare. Patients typically are visited by skilled nursing providers, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, or occupational therapists. How long home health care services last depends on the patient's needs and goals.

To be eligible for home coverage, patients have to meet certain criteria, such as being considered homebound. This means limited ability to leave the home without help. Service length depends on the needs of the patient, and frequency may decrease over time as the patient's health improves.

Hospice care

Hospice care can be administered at home

or in another setting, but it's different from other home care in that it is not curative. Patients who have terminal illnesses can be placed in hospice care. This care focuses on pain and symptom management for those who are not expected to live longer than six months. Hospice services can include help with personal care from a home health aide, skilled nursing, medical social work to help with advanced directives and insurance, and bereavement counseling.

To receive hospice care, a doctor must determine that the patient has less than six months to live if the illness will follow the typical course. Hospice patients do not have to be homebound, according to Amedisys, a provider of health care in the home. Hospice visits typically increase over time as the patient's health declines.

Ultra processed foods poses dangers



The results of two studies recently published in the British medical journal The BMJ found that eating a lot of ultra processed foods significantly increases men's risk of colorectal cancer.

The results of two studies recently published in the British medical journal The BMJ found that eating a lot of ultra processed foods significantly increases men's risk of colorectal cancer. Published in August 2022, the studies, which examined

in both the United States and Italy, also found that diets high in ultra processed foods can lead to heart disease and early death in both men and women. Processed and ultra processed foods include meats such as bacon, beef jerky, corned beef, ham, hot dogs,

and salami.

Various organizations, including the World Health Organization, the American Cancer Society and the American Institute for Cancer Research, have previously warned that those meats are associated with a higher risk of bowel cancer in men and women. The studies published in August 2022 reported that it's not just ultra processed meats that increase risk for cancer, but also other processed or ultra processed foods, including ready-to-eat-or-heat foods such as French fries, prepackaged soups, sauces, frozen pizza, doughnuts, and store-bought cookies and cakes, among others.



The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health reports there are 53 million unpaid caregivers providing care for loved ones.

— Caregivers fill critical gaps in care

Caregivers provide care to their patients so they can overcome illness or injury, or to support individuals plagued by chronic conditions.

Caregivers may be paid professionals who are employed in the medical field, but many are friends and family members who step up when needed.

The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health reports there are 53 million unpaid caregivers providing care for loved ones in the home across the United States. It is estimated these people provide more than \$870 billion a year in service to society

in terms of caring for others.

In 2022, Statistics Canada estimated that 13.4 million Canadians age 15 or older (42 percent of the population) provided unpaid care to either children or dependent adults.

Unpaid caregivers have been called upon more readily due to certain factors, namely that people are living longer and there are limited resources available to provide care.

The cost of long-term professional care is out of reach for many families when services are not covered by private insurance or government-subsidized health programs.

Reading may help combat cognitive decline



Millions of people will be diagnosed with various dementias, and individuals may wonder if there is anything they can do to prevent or delay cognitive decline. A study published in July 2021 in the journal Neurology found people who read regularly had a lower risk of developing dementia compared to those who did not. Reading improves memory, attention, processing

speed, and other factors in older adults by stimulating the brain through the activation of multiple cognitive processes. Reading promotes the creation of new neural connections and strengthens existing ones, helping to maintain brain health, according to a 2023 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

The 7 stages of Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive and debilitating condition that slowly robs a person of their memories and personality. Alzheimer's disease is a form of dementia that produces various symptoms that occur in stages, ultimately arriving at a point when a person can no longer live independently due to cognitive decline.

The Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research Foundation says there are seven clinical stages of Alzheimer's. Stages 1 through 3 are the pre-dementia stages, while stages 4 through 7 are the dementia stages. Here is a close look at what these stages entail, according to the Global Deterioration Scale.

Stage 1

There is no cognitive decline, nor noticeable symptoms.

Stage 2

A person may experience very mild cognitive decline. This can include one feeling like he or she is having memory lapses, but no symptoms of dementia can be detected by others, including medical professionals.

Stage 3

During stage 3, mild cognitive de-



cline begins to become noticeable. Friends, family or coworkers begin to notice difficulties, which may include problems coming up with the right words or names; trouble remembering names; greater difficulty performing tasks; and losing or misplacing a valuable object.

Stage 4

A careful medical interview should

reveal symptoms of moderate cognitive decline. Forgetfulness of recent events; difficulty performing complex tasks like planning a meal for guests or paying bills; forgetfulness about one's own personal history; and becoming moody or withdrawn are possible.

Stage 5

Cognitive decline continues to

progress to where it becomes moderately severe. Gaps in memory are noticeable and individuals likely will need help with everyday activities. Some may be unable to recall their addresses or telephone numbers, while others may be confused about the day or where they are. Stage 5 is usually the stage when a person can no longer live without assistance.

Stage 6

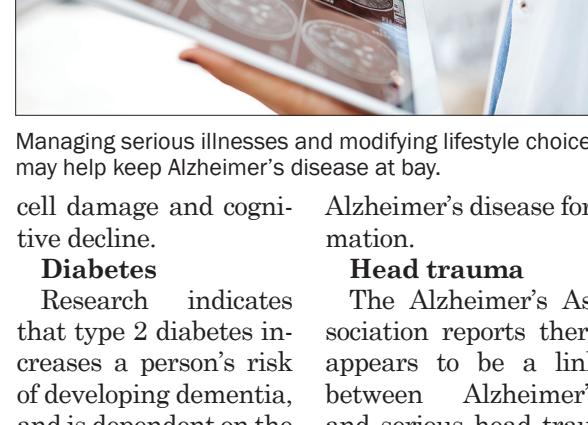
Very severe memory loss, loss of communication skills and inability to recognize loved ones occurs during the severe cognitive decline stage. One will need total care.

Stage 7

This is the end-stage of the disease and is marked by profound cognitive impairment. Loss of mobility and effective communication typically occurs at this stage.

It's important to note that these stages are general guidelines of what can be expected as Alzheimer's disease progresses. Symptoms may vary among different people, and not everyone with Alzheimer's will progress through these stages at the same rate.

Modifiable risk factors for Alzheimer's disease



Managing serious illnesses and modifying lifestyle choices may help keep Alzheimer's disease at bay.

cell damage and cognitive decline.

Diabetes

Research indicates that type 2 diabetes increases a person's risk of developing dementia, and is dependent on the length of time someone has diabetes and how severe it is, says the Alzheimer's Society. Diabetes, like hypertension, can cause damage to blood vessels feeding nutrients and oxygen to the brain.

Smoking

Smoking is a tricky subject when it comes to Alzheimer's research. A report published in the journal Alzheimer's & Dementia in June 2015 indicated cigarette smoking has been linked to both increased and decreased risk for Alzheimer's disease. However, the study's findings indicated overall former/active smoking is related to a significantly increased risk for Alzheimer's disease because of the related cerebral oxidative stress that facilitates

Alzheimer's disease formation.

Head trauma

The Alzheimer's Association reports there appears to be a link between Alzheimer's and serious head trauma, especially when an injury causes loss of consciousness. Taking steps to avoid head injury may be a preventive step against Alzheimer's.

Alcohol

There is a complex relationship between alcohol and Alzheimer's disease. Bright-Focus Foundation reports moderate alcohol use may accelerate Alzheimer's disease, while the Alzheimer's Association says recent research published in the journal Neuro-psychiatric Disease has shown moderate drinking (two alcoholic drinks per day) reduces one's chances of developing Alzheimer's, while regular heavy drinking can increase the chances by 300 percent.



Knowledge of Alzheimer's disease can make it easier for individuals and their families to navigate life after a diagnosis.

Alzheimer's disease: Separating fact from fiction

Millions of people are living with Alzheimer's disease, a progressive, irreversible brain disorder that causes cognitive decline, confusion, memory loss, and many other symptoms. The Alzheimer's Association says one in three seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia.

Learning to recognize facts from fiction regarding Alzheimer's disease can help families navigate a diagnosis more effectively. These facts are courtesy of the Alzheimer's Society.

MYTH: Alzheimer's disease only affects older people.

FACT: Although age is the most significant risk factor for Alzheimer's, young-onset Alzheimer's disease can occur in people from their 30s to mid-60s.

MYTH: Alzheimer's is a natural course of aging.

FACT: It is important to understand that Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging. It is a distinct progressive illness that goes beyond the minor memory loss that occurs when one gets older.

MYTH: Alzheimer's disease and dementia are the same thing.

FACT: Alzheimer's disease is one form of dementia. Diseases other than Alzheimer's disease also fall under the dementia umbrella, in-

cluding vascular dementia, frontotemporal dementia and Lewy body dementia.

MYTH: Having a family member with Alzheimer's disease means I will definitely inherit it.

FACT: Although there are genetic components for early-onset and late-onset Alzheimer's disease, even the presence of genetic mutations does not mean that a person will definitely develop the disease.

MYTH: There is a cure for Alzheimer's disease.

FACT: There are medications and other approaches that can often help with some of the symptoms of Alzheimer's, but at present there is no cure.

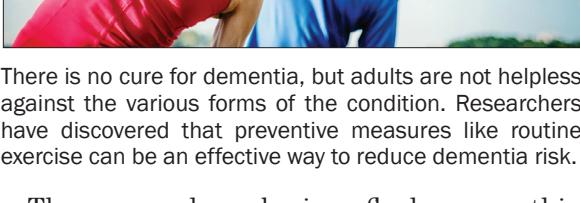
MYTH: Alzheimer's can be prevented by diet or vitamins.

FACT: A healthy diet and lifestyle can help slow cognitive decline and may reduce Alzheimer's risk, but no single factor can fully prevent Alzheimer's disease.

MYTH: Alzheimer's disease is only marked by memory loss.

FACT: Confusion, difficulty with language and communication, problems with planning and decision-making, and changes in mood and behavior are each considered symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

— Exercise and dementia risk: what you should know —



There is no cure for dementia, but adults are not helpless against the various forms of the condition. Researchers have discovered that preventive measures like routine exercise can be an effective way to reduce dementia risk.

Three seconds go by in a flash, but that's enough time for another person to join the masses already diagnosed with dementia. According to Alzheimer's Disease International, every three seconds someone in the world develops dementia, a condition that more than 55 million people were living with in 2020.

The World Health Organization notes that various diseases and injuries that affect the brain

can contribute to dementia. As menacing a threat as dementia presents, individuals are not helpless against it. In fact, exercise, which can help lower risk for heart disease, stroke and various other conditions, can be a valuable ally against dementia as well.

What is the link between exercise and dementia?

Dementia remains something of a mystery, but the Alzheimer's Society notes that evidence is now strong enough to support the assertion that lack of physical exercise increases a person's risk of developing dementia. The Alzheimer's Society also notes that researchers have discovered improvements in thinking and memory and reduced rates of dementia among middle-aged and older adults who exercised compared to those that did not.

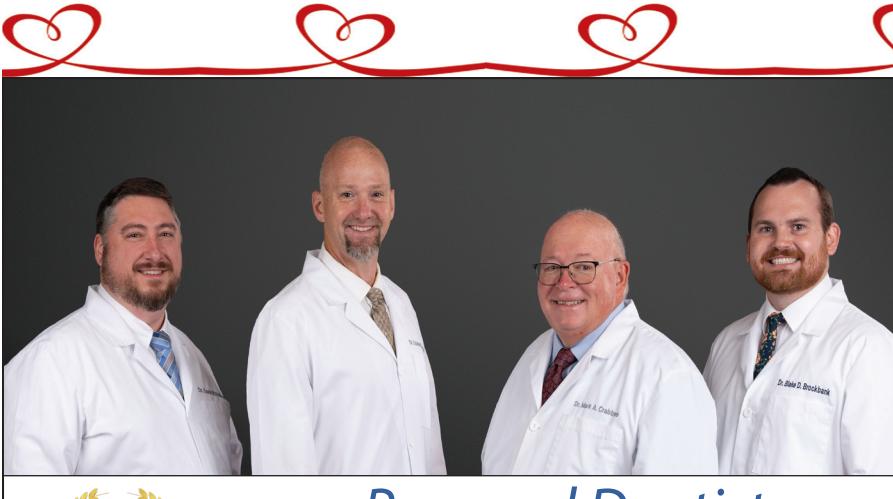
Is cardio the most effective exercise at lowering dementia risk?

Speaking with CNBC, Silky Singh Pahlajani, a clinical professor of behavioral neurology and neuropsychiatry at Weill Cornell Medicine, noted that cardiovascular exercise, often referred to as cardio, can provide the biggest benefit for brain health of any form of exercise. Cardiovascular exercise can increase heart rate, which helps deliver oxygen cells to the brain. The National Institutes of Health notes that oxygen shortages prevent the brain from working as well as it should, and a 2023 study published in the journal Redox Biology found that oxygen abnormality plays a crucial role in the occurrence and progression of Alzheimer's disease.

How should aging adults approach exercise if they have been largely sedentary?

Middle-aged and older adults who have not been physically active

throughout their adult life but want to begin incorporating exercise into their daily routines are urged to speak with their physicians prior to beginning a fitness regimen. Preexisting conditions may make it difficult, if not impossible, to engage in certain forms of exercise. A personal physician can consider a patient's unique medical history and then recommend certain exercises that won't put him or her in jeopardy of suffering an injury or illness. A gradual approach to exercising is typically best for individuals who have lived a sedentary lifestyle. Starting off slowly with a short walk or light physical activity like gardening can help the body acclimate to physical activity at a safe pace. As adults bodies' become more accustomed to exercise, men and women can then gradually increase the intensity of their workouts, switching from walking to jogging on a treadmill when possible.



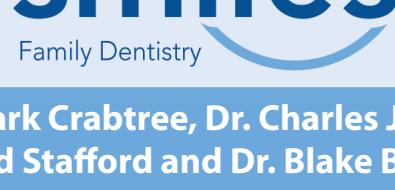
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