

Historic Woolwine building lost in Saturday fire

By Taylor Boyd

The former Patrick County CO-OP building in Woolwine caught fire Saturday, February 7, resulting in a total loss of the commercial property.

Thomas Industrial Fabrication was renting the building from Wade's Produce as a working warehouse.

Woolwine Volunteer Fire Department Chief Bennett Shough said the fire started around 3:30 a.m.

"It was very cold and very windy. It was a big fire with the wind driving the fire, and everybody about froze to death," he said.

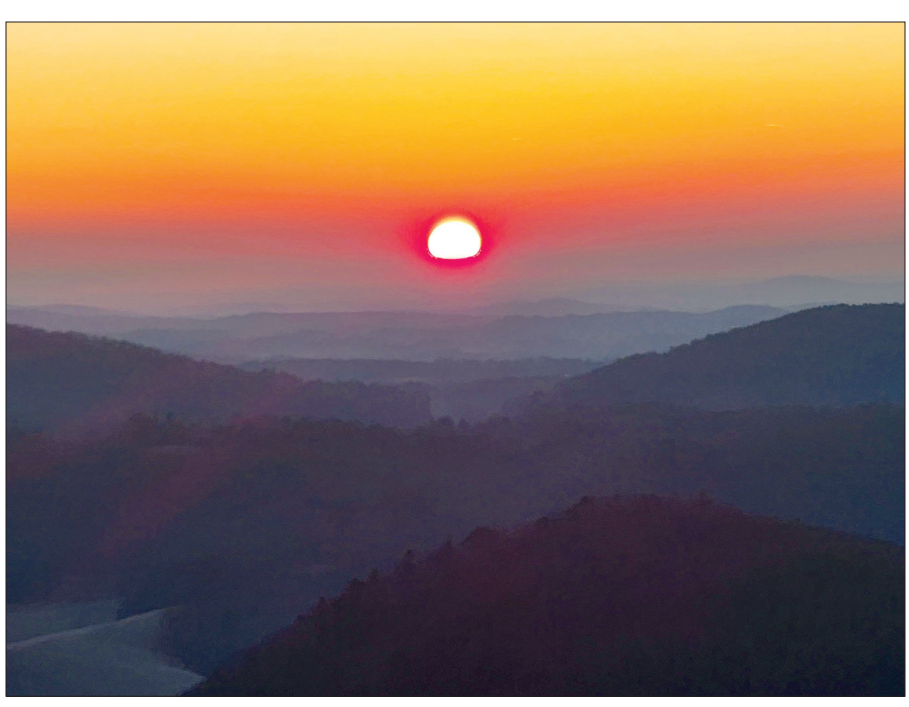
Firefighters were on scene till about 2:30 p.m. containing the fire.

"The wind was driving the fire. There was just so much involved - the building's so big, it was just hard to contain. We couldn't get inside it because it was caving in in places, and there's so much stuff inside the building. We didn't know what was in there, so we didn't want to go in.

(See Fire p. 7)



The former Patrick County CO-OP building in Woolwine caught fire Saturday, February 7. Courtesy Patrick Springs Volunteer Fire Department.



Daybreak in the mountains

Morning light spreads across the mountains, blending cool blues and purples with warm reds and golds at sunrise in this photo submitted by Tammy Franklin and titled "Mountain Morning Winter Sunrise."



Poor Farmers' Market has remained open throughout the winter weather. (Photo by Felecia Shelor)

Winter storms strain local businesses

By Taylor Boyd

Due to the recent winter weather and icy road conditions, many businesses throughout the county have been closed, some for days.

Icy precipitation kicked off the weather in late January, with multiple snowfalls and frigid temperatures following soon after.

Poor Farmers' Market and Concord Corner Store owner Felecia Shelor said both businesses essentially came to a grinding halt when the weather turned cold. However, Shelor felt like she had to keep Poor Farmer's Market open to serve the community.

"We're the only business in the community that sells diesel, and we have food in the deli, and we try to be there for the road crews, the local contractors, farmers, and people

who have to be out," she said.

Despite being one of the only businesses open in Meadows of Dan, Shelor said business was slow, with only about 40-50 customers each day.

"Many of those are the same people coming in more than once a day, like the VDOT crews," she said of Virginia Department of Transportation crews working to clear the roads.

After a week of being closed, Concord reopened on Friday.

"That's a problem because we have employees who need to make money. We keep that store open primarily because we need to keep our staff employed in the winter, so we have to open it back up when the roads are good enough," she said.

(See Winter Storms p. 6)

Former delegate Charles Poindexter remembered as devoted public servant

By Taylor Boyd

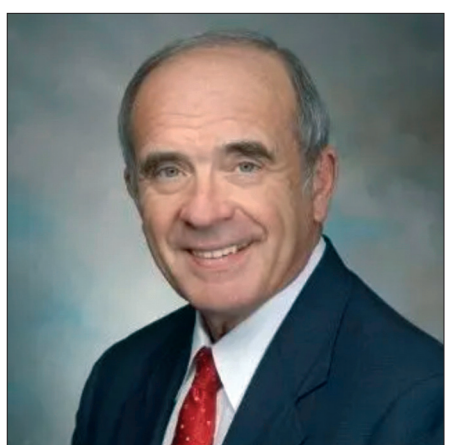
Former House of Delegates representative Charles Douglas "Charlie" Poindexter died at his home on Wednesday, Feb. 4. He was 83.

Poindexter served in the House from 2008-2022, representing the 9th district, which included Patrick, Henry, and Franklin counties.

He also represented the Union Hall District on the Franklin County Board of Supervisors for eight years.

The House of Delegates adjourned in Poindexter's honor on February 5.

Will Pace, Poindexter's legislative assistant for eight years, said his tenure working for Poindexter will always be among the highlights of his life.



Former Del. Charles Poindexter passed away at age 83 on Feb. 4. He served as the 9th District House of Delegates representative for 14 years, from 2008-2022.

"In 2014, I left a dream job in Washington, D.C. to take a chance (See Poindexter p. 8)

County leaders advocate for local issues at Capitol



Andrew Overby, chairman of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors, right, and Clayton Kendrick, vice chairman, with his wife, Edith Kendrick, attended Virginia Association of Counties Day at the General Assembly in Richmond, where local officials met with state lawmakers, including Sen. Bill Stanley, left, to discuss county priorities. Contributed photos



Andrew Overby, chairman of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors, and Clayton Kendrick, vice chairman, with his wife, Edith Kendrick, meet with Del. Wren Williams, right, last week at the General Assembly in Richmond. Local leaders discussed issues affecting Patrick County.

Officials from Patrick County joined local leaders from across Virginia in Richmond last week for the Virginia Association of Counties Conference at the General Assembly, meeting with legislators to discuss county priorities and advocate for issues affecting local governments.

January at the Patrick County Library

“Rest is not laziness. It is a crucial part of the cycle of life, a period of renewal that prepares us for what’s ahead.” —Louise Wallace

January was a month of reflection and resetting. Sam has returned from maternity leave and we are so glad to have our team back together. Joni started a new chair yoga program, which has been a hit. Another change we made this month is the Lego Club has been switched to the first and third Monday of the month. Emme’s Book Bingo went well, and one participant left with three or four books.

The Book Bedazzling Club was well attended. We had three teenagers present, which was amazing. They helped me come up with ideas on activities teenagers in 2026 are interested in. Stay tuned for future teen programming here at the Patrick County Library. I love this bedazzling group. Every time we meet, we have new members. It’s so nice to meet new people and through asking questions and creating relationships, learn what people are interested in and create opportunity for our community here at the library.

Our Dolly Day Celebration had an amazing turnout. Thirty-one people came and helped us celebrate Dolly Parton’s 80th birthday. Cowboy hats were made, cookies and cupcakes were eaten and Mrs. Sam read some of Dolly’s books that are in our library. If that wasn’t enough, Emme led line dancing in the meeting room, proving that there was fun for one and all. Thank you to all who participated and we look forward to next year’s celebration.

Decade’s trivia night was scheduled for January 15, and unfortunately it was so cold outside that no one attended. But I am determined because Abby works so diligently on her trivia questions, making sure they are age appropriate and proven correct and I know this event is enjoyed. We rescheduled trivia night for the following Thursday, and we had two teams come out. We had so much fun. It was interesting to see that the questions from 1990-2020 were just as tricky as the questions from the 1920-1960s. Contestants dressed up in 1940s through 90s attire, with some dressed in 2020 fashion. I really enjoy seeing people attend Trivia Night and display their creativity in their outfits. The goal in my mind when players leave the library on trivia night is having learned a factoid and having laughed out loud at least once. I am proud to say this goal has been met each trivia night.

During our Senior Social meeting in January, we used this day as an opportunity to plan our



meetings for the entire year. I am so excited about all the events we came up with. We have educational programs, creative programs, and some food programs in the works. If you are interested in more information on the Senior Social Programming, please look for the Year at a Glance setup I have posted in the library.

Due to inclement weather, Norma Bozenmayer and I decided we should reschedule the Bears in VA program that we had scheduled for January 24, to February 14th at 11am. I encourage everyone to come out and learn about black bears. There is no registration or age limit.

The last week of January was spent essentially at home, stuck in place, due to winter weather and temperatures that stayed below freezing. The Patrick County Library was open on Friday, January 30th from 12-2pm. We had

to reschedule or cancel a couple of events. They were the Basic Technology Class part 2: Smart Phones and National Shelfie Day. The Basic Tech Pt. 2 Smart Phone class has been rescheduled for Thursday, February 26th at 1pm.

****If you are a bookmobile patron, our staff safety and the safety of our patrons are our top priority. There may be times when the library is open but the bookmobile remains parked at the library due to parking safety issues. Should you have a question or concern, please contact the library.**

With January ending in such a wintery fashion, I can honestly say that I hope February loves us and brings some clear, warmer days. I hope you all come by the library to see us and stock up on some good reading materials.

Until next month, Happy Reading!
Somer Ojodeagua, Branch Manager

Chamber Chat for January



By Rebecca Adcock

After what felt like seven hundred days of January, we have finally made it to February – bringing along much of the same cold, ice, and snow. Still, as I look out on this snowy first day of the month, the sunshine reflecting off the snow is a good reminder that even winter has

its bright moments. If weather or winter disruptions knocked your January plans off track, take this as your sign: February is a fresh start.

January is always a busy time for the Chamber as we kick off our annual membership drive, begin Spring magazine ad sales, and map out events and programming for the year ahead.

Looking back, 2025 was a strong year for the Chamber, made possible by our members, partners, and community. From business support and leadership programming to tourism promotion and community events like Stuart Spooktacular and Hometown Christmas, the work we do together truly reflects our motto: Community Is Our Business.

As we move into 2026, the Chamber will continue focusing on supporting local businesses, hosting educational opportunities, promoting Patrick County, and serving as a resource for our community. This month, we are continuing our partnership with Patrick & Henry Community College to offer entrepreneurial classes locally, and on February 24, 2026, we will host two programs: an ADA Digital Compliance workshop at 12:00 noon, and a Community Committee Interest program at 5:30 p.m., in partner-

ship with the Patrick County government.

Thank you to our members for your continued support – your business, our community make us stronger together!

Welcome to new chamber members: Daniel’s Auto Glass & Tint, Disaster Relief Food Ministry, Hodges Workwise, Thomas Heating & Air LLC, and Healing Waters Day Spa.

Adcock is the executive director of the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce

Pets of the Week



Will you be my Valentine? This Aussie mixed male is 8 months old, and this 4-month-old female, a sweet pit mix, are searching. Please visit the shelter and meet them all. Your forever valentine is closer than you think!

Please save a life! Adopt! These are wonderful pets! All dogs and cats deserve a permanent, loving home. Call the Patrick County Public Animal Shelter at (276) 694-6259, visit the shelter or

their Facebook page, to find information about these and other available pets in need of a forever home. Adoption fees are \$10 and include spay/neuter and vaccinations.

The Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League provides pet food and spay/neuter assistance. Contact blueridgeawl@gmail.com for details. Visit the Blue Ridge Animal Welfare League website at www.blueridgeawl.org.

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Area agencies say governor’s order won’t impact operations

By Taylor Boyd
Gov. Abigail Spanberger’s recent executive order outlining statewide law enforcement standards will not change operations for local agencies, officials said.

The order directs state law enforcement agencies to align policies and training with principles focused on public trust and community safety and ends certain federal immigration enforcement agreements.

However, authorities in Henry and Patrick counties, and the City of Martinsville, said they are not affected by the directive.

Patrick County Sheriff Dan Smith said Spanberger’s executive orders do not pertain to anyone but state law enforcement.

“She’s their boss. Nothing was changed with us,” he said.

Smith noted individual localities will also decide if they will cooperate with the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

“Anytime we have somebody in our jail that is an illegal alien that has detainers on them, we’ve always cooperated in the past, and we will continue to do so,” he said.

Henry County Sheriff Wayne Davis said that while “there has been some confusion within the community about what Governor Spanberger’s Executive Order means for Henry County, I want to be very clear: this order applies only to state law enforcement agencies — primarily the Virginia State Police and the Department of Corrections. It does not apply to sheriffs or sheriff’s offices in the Commonwealth.”

Davis added that his office “will continue to cooperate fully with all federal law enforcement agencies,

including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Our mission, our authority, and our partnerships remain unchanged.”

By rescinding the order, Martinsville Police Chief Chad Rhoads said Spanberger reset the state’s directive to where it was late last year.

“Political back and forth is what it is. It doesn’t really affect the way we do things. It doesn’t affect the way we do business,” he said.

U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Salem, said, “law enforcement officials are important public safety servants in Virginia’s Ninth District. A core function of their mission is to protect Virginia communities, and I believe cooperation between local, state, and federal officials helps accomplish that goal.

“I believe Governor Spanberger’s action to terminate 287(g) agreements directly undermines this goal and potentially pits local communities, state law enforcement, and federal law enforcement against each other. This creates danger for all involved,” Griffith said.

“This executive directive can be seen as encouraging behaviors and actions that obstruct federal law enforcement,” he said. “Because the public safety needs of our communities are in Virginia’s best interest, I urge Governor Spanberger to rescind this harmful executive directive.”

Spanberger, a former federal law enforcement officer, said the order issued last week is based on core values that emphasize preserving human life, protecting vulnerable people, and upholding the U.S. and Virginia constitutions.

The order outlines six guiding principles:

- Law enforcement exists to preserve life, protect vulnerable people and uphold the Constitution.
- Public trust is essential to effective policing and should be built through professionalism, transparency, accountability and consistent community engagement.
- Virginia law enforcement does not engage in fear-based policing or actions that discourage people from seeking help.
- Police efforts should focus on enforcing criminal law and protecting public safety, not on administrative enforcement of civil

status.

- Strong training, recruitment and retention help ensure officers have clear standards and sound preparation.
- Partnerships among law enforcement agencies, residents, educators, faith and civic leaders, businesses and local governments are critical to safe communities and a strong economy.

The executive order directs state law enforcement agencies to review all policies, training and practices to ensure they align with those standards.

Outdoor burning restrictions begin Feb. 15

Virginia’s 4 p.m. burning law takes effect Feb. 15 and runs through April 30.

The law prohibits open-air burning before 4 p.m. if the fire is within 300 feet of woods or dry grass that could carry flames into forested areas. Burning is allowed between 4 p.m. and midnight, provided the person starting the fire takes proper precautions and remains in attendance at all times.

Some localities may have ad-

ditional outdoor burning restrictions. Residents are encouraged to check with their local government before starting any outdoor fire.

Officials remind residents that anyone who starts a fire is responsible for suppression costs if it escapes, even if permits were obtained and precautions were taken.

Violations of the law are a Class 3 misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of up to \$500.

Arrests Reported

The Patrick County Sheriff’s Office reported the following:

*Johnny Ray Gwyn, 57, of Patrick County Jail, was charged Jan. 30 with two counts probation violation. Deputy D. Celozzi was the arresting officer.

*Barry Zwerling, 47, of Stuart, was charged Jan. 31 with fail to appear. Master Deputy E. Sain was the arresting officer.

*Keondre Holmes, 33, of Critz, was charged Feb. 1 with eight counts of probation violation. Trooper D. Bryant was the arresting officer.

*Sarah Rose Branch, 42, of Patrick Springs, was charged Feb. 2 with probation violation. Deputy C.L. Adkins was the arresting officer.

*Mack Lindwood Robertson, 57, of Ararat, was charged Feb. 2 with

five counts probation violation. Sgt. J.C. Fortner was the arresting officer.

*Kevin Wade Anthony, 49, of Patrick Springs, was charged Feb. 3 with five counts probation violation. Master Deputy R. Williams was the arresting officer and Sgt. T. Dalton made the arrest for Henry County.

*Curtis Wayne Belcher, 40, of Woolwine, was charged Feb. 4 with assault. Lt. D.L. Foley was the arresting officer.

*Nathan Eugene Bedsaul, 40, of Mt. Airy, N.C., was charged Feb. 4 with fail to appear. Deputy C. Gilbert was the arresting officer.

*Michael Cody Solomon, 29, of Martinsville, was charged Feb. 4 with two counts probation violation. Sgt. J.D. Lewis made the arrest for Franklin County.

Spanberger’s “Affordable Virginia Agenda” advances in the General Assembly

Eight of the bills rolled out by Gov. Abigail Spanberger and Virginia legislators in December as part of their “Affordable Virginia Agenda” have already passed through the House of Delegates or Senate — including legislation to protect the long-term supply of affordable housing, improve grid efficiency to lower prices for ratepayers, and expand programs that help Virginians improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

“Virginia families deserve leaders who are fully focused on delivering relief and making the Commonwealth more affordable. That’s why I got to work before day one — together with House and Senate Democratic leadership — to roll out our Affordable Virginia Agenda. My administration is focused on working with our partners in the General Assembly to lower healthcare, housing, and energy costs for Virginians in every community across our Commonwealth,” said Spanberger.

“I look forward to signing these bills — and every piece of legislation in our agenda — into law to bring down costs for Virginians.”

In the opening days of her administration, Governor Spanberger is using the full power of her office to make life less expensive for Virginians. On her first day in office, the Governor signed executive orders to start building a stronger, more

affordable future — including by directing her cabinet secretaries and all executive branch agencies to quickly identify ways to reduce costs for families. Governor Spanberger also made clear in her first joint address to the General Assembly that she will work with anyone — from either party — to drive down costs.

A list of the “Affordable Virginia Agenda” legislation passed by the Virginia House of Delegates or Senate includes:

- HB2 (Del. Carr) — Reducing heating and energy costs for Virginians who need it most
- HB3 (Del. LeVere Bolling) — Establishing a Virginia Weatherization Task Force to improve energy efficiency
- HB4 (Del. Bennett-Parker) — Empowering localities to preserve and protect the long-term availability of affordable housing
- HB15 (Del. Price), SB48 (Sen. Rouse) — Improving protections for Virginia renters (passed by House and Senate)
- HB220 (Del. Hope), SB630 (Sen. Carroll Foy) — Eliminating additional fees on healthcare premiums (passed by House and Senate)
- HB 434 (Del. LeVere Bolling) — Optimizing grid utilization to get more out of the current distribution system.

Smyth County doctor faces child exploitation charges

A 68-year-old doctor, who worked at Smyth County Community Hospital and allegedly had a sexual relationship with an underage female coworker that included exchanging explicit images with the victim, was arrested last week by the FBI.

Michael Kevin Patrick, of Sugar Grove, Va., was charged via federal criminal complaint with receipt of child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

A criminal complaint is merely an accusation. The defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

According to court documents, Juvenile Victim 1 (JV1) began working at Smyth County Community Hospital in December 2023, when she was 16 years old. Shortly after starting her job, JV1 met Patrick in an elevator. JV1 told Patrick she was 17 years old, in high school, and interested in the medical field. The two began talking regularly at work.

In late 2024, JV1 and Patrick

started eating lunch together and communicating regularly via text messages and phone calls. Eventually, Patrick and JV1 engaged in sexual conversations with one another and exchanged nude pictures of themselves via text message.

In addition, Patrick started having a physical relationship with JV1 at his home and at work. During that span of time, JV1 was 16 years old. Patrick told JV1 that he was “looking forward to” her birthday, that the relationship had to be “secret,” and that he “needed” her. After JV1 turned 17, and after Patrick believed JV1 had turned 18, Patrick had sexual intercourse with JV1.

Patrick and JV1 exchanged more than 19,000 text messages with one another. After Patrick’s activities were discovered, he deleted his text messages with JV1.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Marion Police Department.

Virginia is a top state for wildlife-vehicle collisions, and this bill could help reduce them

By Elle Cota
Capital News Service

Virginia, which ranks among the top 10 states for wildlife-vehicle collisions, could soon have a voluntary grant fund for wildlife corridors that better protect drivers and animals.

Del. Shelly Simonds, D-Newport News, introduced House Bill 597 this legislative session, to create a nonreverting grant fund in the state treasury, supported by voluntary contributions, to be used for wildlife corridor and wildlife crossing projects.

Because the fund is nonreverting, any deposited money would remain available across fiscal years, including the use of voluntary contributions and grants rather than general tax increases.

If passed, the director of the Department of Wildlife Resources will administer the fund in collaboration with the state’s Transportation, Conservation and Recreation, and Forestry departments. Eligible applicants would include state agencies, local governments, metropolitan planning and non-profit organizations, regional

transportation authorities, Indian tribes and academic institutions.

“There’s already this wildlife corridor action plan,” Simonds said. “Now, the question is having some funding that’s stable to try to implement some of these goals.”

The fund could also receive voluntary contributions through the Department of Motor Vehicles and individual state income tax checkoffs, as well as donations and grants and any future appropriated funds.

The DMV would provide an electronic donation option and clearly state contributions are optional. The income tax check-off would follow existing rules for entities entitled to voluntary contributions, including a \$10,000 minimum contribution over three years.

“It’s a really appropriate opportunity for people to be able to donate to a fund when they’re renewing their driver’s license or doing operations at the DMV,” Simonds said.

Simonds added the proposal

supports collaboration between agencies and data-sharing to help local-level planning, while also training staff on the cost and safety benefits of wildlife crossings.

“Sometimes moving the needle on issues like this takes time, but we are here,” Simonds said. “We

are all committed to doing this.”

Improved data collection helps determine where wildlife crossings are most effective, as many collisions go unreported, said Connor Ransom, conservation associate for Environment Virginia,

(See Virginia p. 6)

Patrick Pioneers

Dr. Powell Benton Reynolds
By Beverly Belcher Woody

The mountains of Patrick County have long sent forth sons and daughters whose lives have reached far beyond their birthplace. One such individual was Dr. Powell Benton Reynolds, a native son whose career in education, ministry, and public service touched thousands and brought distinction to both West Virginia and his Virginia home.

Powell Benton Reynolds was born in Patrick County, Virginia, on January 9, 1841, the son of James B. Reynolds and Roxana Shelor Reynolds. Like many young men of his generation, his early adulthood was shaped by the Civil War. In 1861, he enlisted in the Confederate army, first serving in Company D, Fifth Kentucky Infantry, and later in Company K, Fiftieth Virginia Infantry. He was captured in the autumn of 1864 and imprisoned at Point Lookout, Maryland, one of the war's largest prison camps. He was paroled on April 9, 1865; the very day General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox.

After the war, Reynolds turned his attention to education and self-improvement. He attended Richmond College (now the University of Richmond) from 1865 to 1870, preparing for a lifetime devoted to learning and teaching.

His early career included leadership positions in higher education. From 1872 to 1884, he served as president of Shelton College in St. Albans, West Virginia. He then became president of Buckner College in Arkansas from 1884 to 1885.

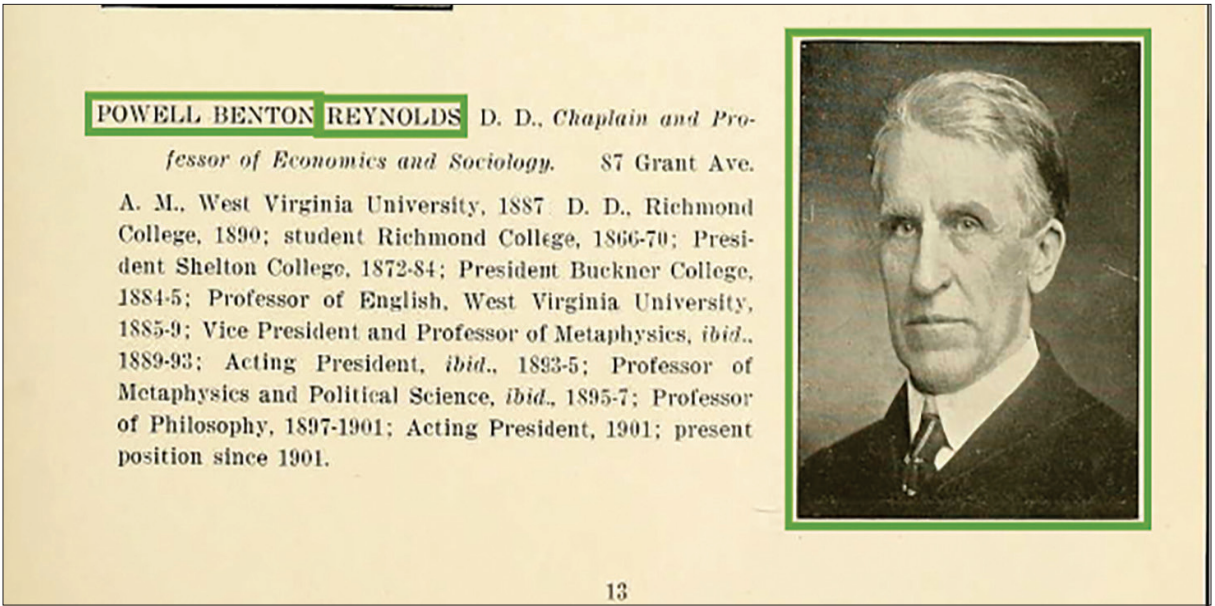
In 1885, Dr. Reynolds began the work for which he would be most widely remembered when he joined the faculty of West Virginia University. Over the next three decades, he became one of the institution's most respected and beloved educators. He served in a variety of roles, including professor of English literature, metaphysics, philosophy, political science, and later as university chaplain. From 1893 to 1895, he served as acting president of the university.

Students across the state knew him affectionately as "Petie," and he was remembered for his gentle, patient, and companionable nature. Former students, scattered throughout the United States, spoke of his lasting influence on their lives.

His contributions were recognized through honorary degrees, including a Master of Arts from West Virginia University in 1887 and a Doctor of Divinity from Richmond College in 1890. In addition to his academic duties, he was an ordained Baptist minister and for many years carried on active ministerial work alongside his teaching.

Dr. Reynolds also participated in public life. Independent in his political thinking, he generally supported Democratic principles but was not strictly bound to party candidates. In 1882, he was the candidate of the Prohibition Party for his district. Later, he served as secretary of the Workmen's Compensation Commission for 1911-1912.

Though much of his life was spent in academic surroundings, he remained closely connected to his community and church. He counted hundreds



1906 West Virginia University Yearbook

Ramos, Jas. V.....	Lat., Math., N. S., Eng.....	Richmond,.....	Va
Randolph, W. P. F.....	Lat., Ger., Math., N. S.....	Albemarle,.....	Va
Reynolds, P. Benton...	Lat., Grk., Fr.....	Patrick,.....	Va
Roberts, W. H.....	Lat., Grk., Eng.....	Roanoke,	Va
Roberts, N. W	Lat., Grk., Math.....	Eufaula,.....	Ala
Ross, Fenton T.....	Pr. Math., Eng., C. C.....	Loudoun,.....	Va
Rust, W. R.....	Pr. Lat., Pr. Math., Pr. Eng....	Westmoreland,	Va

1870 Richmond College Directory

among his friends and neighbors and was active for many years in the Baptist church. His passing was mourned not only locally, but throughout the state and nation.

Dr. Reynolds died at his home in Morgantown on December 29, 1914, at the age of 73. He had been in declining health since being overcome by heat the previous summer, and his final illness was attributed to uremic poisoning. During his last days, his children gathered at his bedside, and he passed peacefully.

Dr. Reynolds married twice. His first wife was Virginia Henrietta Woolwine of Patrick County, whom he married on January 30, 1868. Virginia was born on March 7, 1844, to Thomas Woolwine, postmaster of Rock Castle, and Sarah "Sally" Adams. Her paternal grandparents were John Woolwine and Margaret Haymaker of Montgomery County, Virginia, while her maternal grandparents were Isaac C. Adams and Exoney Ingram of the northern district of Patrick County. Virginia's brother was Captain Rufus Woolwine of the 51st Virginia Infantry, who later served as Sheriff of Patrick County.

Powell and Virginia had three children: Wayland Fuller Reynolds (1869-1939), Maybelle Fuller Reynolds Glasscock (1870-1942), and Horace Bushnell Reynolds (1872-1876). Virginia died on January 12, 1873, shortly after the birth of Horace.

Dr. Reynolds's second wife, Marietta Love Reynolds of Putnam County, West Virginia, also

survived him. Seven children were born to this marriage, with two living at the time of his death: Mrs. L. D. (Ethel) Arnett of Morgantown and Boyce W. Reynolds of Chicago.

Dr. Reynolds was also survived by one brother and three sisters who remained in Patrick County, a reminder that despite his wide influence, his roots in the Blue Ridge were never far removed.

For nearly thirty years at West Virginia University, and for many years before in other institutions, Dr. Powell Benton Reynolds shaped young minds and left a lasting impression on thousands of lives. His story stands as another example of how the values of faith, education, perseverance, and service, carried from the hills of Patrick County, could influence communities far beyond its borders.

Today, his life remains a point of pride for Patrick County — a testament to the enduring legacy of its people and the quiet strength of a mountain upbringing.

Information on Dr. Powell Benton Reynolds was found in Patrick County birth, marriage, death, and census records, as well as in The Daily Telegram (Clarksburg, West Virginia), Wednesday, December 30, 1914, page 5; The Enterprise, January 4, 1915; The Baltimore Sun, January 3, 1915; and The Courier-Journal (Louisville, Kentucky), December 30, 1914, page 4.

For questions, comments, or story ideas, 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

Why is my Social Security Retirement Benefit So Small? – Ask Rusty

Dear Rusty: Can you help me understand? I have paid into Social Security since I started working in 1978. I did have a lot of tax deductions, but I don't understand why I only receive \$350 a month from Social Security. *Signed: Befuddled Senior*

Dear Befuddled Senior: Your Social Security benefit is based upon your average monthly earnings for the 35 years over your lifetime that you earned the most while contributing to the Social Security program (however, your benefit isn't based on your contributions to SS). Your average lifetime earnings amount is called your "AIME" or "Average Indexed Monthly Earnings," which are adjusted for inflation for years before you turn 60. Your earnings (your net earnings if self-employed) are provided to the SSA by the IRS. Your average lifetime earnings number (your "AIME") is subjected to a formula which calculates your "Primary Insurance Amount" or "PIA," which is the SS benefit you receive if you start benefits in the month you reach your full retirement age. Your personal full retirement age (FRA) depends on the year you were born which, if you were born in 1960 or later, is age 67. However, if you claim Social Security before reaching your FRA, you will get only a percentage of your PIA (reduced from what you would get if you claimed at your FRA).

For example, if you claimed at age 62, you would only get 70% of the

amount you would have gotten had you waited until age 67, or if you claimed at age 63 you would get 75% of your age 67 benefit. The reduction is less as you get closer to your FRA; if you claimed at age 65, you'd get about 87% of your full retirement age amount.

You can see your lifetime Social Security earnings record at your personal "my Social Security" online account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount (you will need to first create that online account), or you can call Social Security at 1.800.772.1213 to request an "Earnings Statement" be sent to you. That statement will show your lifetime earnings by year, the 35 highest of which were used to calculate your PIA (your Social Security benefit at your FRA). Generally, your Social Security FRA benefit will be about 40% or less of your average indexed monthly earnings.

So, to recap, your SS retirement benefit isn't based on your contributions to the program; it's based on your average monthly lifetime earnings. If you had less than 35 years contributing to the program, SS would still use 35 years in the benefit formula by using zero dollars in earnings for some number of years, which would result in a smaller AIME. Thus, if you claimed before your full retirement age of 67, your SS benefit was reduced because you claimed early. And if you had less than 35 years of SS-covered employment, your AIME was less, resulting in a smaller PIA. And that is likely why your monthly Social Security retirement benefit is low.

One other thought to consider: if you are married and your spouse's monthly SS benefit is considerably more than yours (e.g., more than twice as much as yours), you may

want to explore your options for spouse benefits.

I hope this explains how your SS benefit is calculated, but if you still question your monthly SS retirement amount, I suggest you first obtain your "Earnings Statement" to review the lifetime earnings SS has on file for you. If there are any discrepancies in your Social Security's earnings record, there are correction remedies available to you. If that is the case, please feel free to contact us again for more information.

This article is intended for infor-

Not Sorry

(cont. from page 4)

son's consequences than to confront the behavior pattern and risk the blow-up that may follow. It can be terrifying to insist on accountability when someone is hurting you and choose to only accept responsibility for your own choices, rather than taking on the weight of theirs. Abusive personalities will project blame for their actions to everyone around them, in full expectation of others picking up the load.

We are trained, perhaps even brainwashed, by the abusive person to accept that their perception of reality is always right. To believe that confronting them equals being controlling. To feel that pointing out areas that need change or growth must naturally be disrespect or paranoia. We don't like conflict, we don't enjoy being blamed for motives we don't have — so we cower, and retreat behind a smiling mask, say sorry, and stay silent...

This happens in corporate offices when that one girl keeps stealing credit for everyone's ideas but no-

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body wants to be the one to "out" her, so she keeps on doing it to every new employee.

It happens when sexual abuse victims are too scared to speak out, too ashamed to admit what happened, and so the charming and trusted predator stays free to continue abusing with impunity.

It happens in families when there's that one relative who makes everyone walk on eggshells at every family get together, because nobody wants to brave the firestorm that would come from an intervention.

It happens when wives keep secrets about their husband's pornography addictions, while the entire family suffers from his secondary addictive cycles and the atmosphere of deceit and disengagement that ultimately results.

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

Wood Brothers Racing Race Report: Bowman Gray

Josh Berry and the No. 21 Motorcraft/Quick Lane team emerged from a marathon Cook Out Clash at Bowman Gray Stadium with a 12th-place finish after winning the preliminary Last Chance Qualifier to earn a spot in the 200-lap main event, which was impacted by the same winter weather that pushed the race from Sunday to Wednesday night.

For the second straight year, Berry raced his way into the Clash starting field with a top-two finish in the 75-lap Last Chance Qualifier. In 2025, it took an aggressive drive to second to advance. This year, Berry started on the pole, briefly lost the lead to AJ Allmendinger, then powered back to the front, leading the final 59 laps to beat second-place finisher Austin Cindric by 7.4 seconds. By the time the checkered flag flew, Berry had lapped up to the ninth-place driver.

“We just struggled a little bit on the restarts,” Berry said between races. “With the cold temperatures,



I was locking the left front and got it locked up a little bit under AJ and washed him out. But once we were able to settle in and get some heat in the tires, I felt good about our car.”

Berry said advancing to the main event was a relief.

“It’s a long night when you don’t

make this race.”

It turned out to be a long night anyway.

Starting 21st in the main event, Berry steadily worked his way forward and was running 13th at the halftime break. During the break, sleet began to fall, prompting teams to switch to treaded tires designed

for wet-track conditions. The change initially worked in Berry’s favor as he climbed into the top 10 by Lap 115, but four laps later he was involved in one of the Clash-record 17 caution periods that plagued much of the second half of the race.

Berry returned to the track one lap down in 22nd place before rejoining the lead lap at the three-quarter mark of the non-points exhibition. With laps under caution not counting, the race stretched to three and a half hours in length.

With 35 laps remaining, Berry was running 19th but continued to move forward, advancing into the top 15 by Lap 175 and climbing to 12th by Lap 185. He held that position through the remainder of the race.

Berry and the No. 21 team now turn their focus to Speedweeks at Daytona International Speedway, where qualifying for the Daytona 500 is set for Feb. 11, followed by the Great American Race on Feb. 15.

Winter Storms

(cont. from page 1)

Stuart Family Restaurant owner Terry Dalton said his business has seen about a 60 percent decline due to the weather.

“The biggest thing is at night, (with) people not coming out due to ice freezing back up,” he said.

Even breakfast and lunch hours are slower “because people are bound at home and not going to work.

“So not only do we lose the lunch crowd, but we lose the people that are at work, they’re actually at home now,” he said.

In addition, January typically is the slowest month, Dalton said, and added that Friday-Saturday are the restaurant’s biggest days. Because of the weather, the restaurant has been closed on some Fridays and Saturdays.

“When churches are closed, you lose your Sunday crowd too.” Even if churches are open, there are “not as many people going with this cold air, weather, and wind,” he said.

However, despite the conditions, Dalton noted that many of his regular customers are still coming in.

“Some of your seniors aren’t coming as much just because it is cold outside, and that does affect them as well,” he said.

After being closed the last week of January, Coffee Break owner Denny Alley said the restaurant was finally able to reopen on Feb. 3.

“We just weren’t able to get out of the house,” he said of the impromptu closure.

Alley said the Feb. 3 reopening was packed with many members of the Tuesday morning music crowd.

“All the guys showed up playing today, so we’ve had a good crowd. There’s not an open seat in the house,” he said.

While the weather kept a lot of people indoors, Alley said younger customers are more likely to venture out.

“The senior citizens tend to stay in. As a rule, in bad weather, the older people don’t tend to come out. They’re afraid they’ll fall and things like that,” Alley said.

While the snow hasn’t stopped Wood’s Cold Storage & Supply from opening, co-owner Johnnie Wood said business has slowed down a little bit.

“We have closed early and opened late some mornings, primarily because we have to do things on the farm, feeding cattle and so forth, before we open the store. So, it takes a little bit longer to feed with the cold and snow,” he said.

Wood estimated customer traffic has dropped by about half.

“People just aren’t out and moving around,” he said.

Clay & Twig, a Critz garden center, has been closed for over two weeks due to the winter conditions.

Jonathan Witt, owner, said he’s unable to set his products out because they’ll go bad in the weather.

“I’ve kind of lost a bit there. I’m currently trying to work on it. As far as climate control in the barn, I don’t have any way to heat it or cool it to keep my products” viable, he said.

While he intended to reopen late last week, Witt hopes to reopen later this week on Friday.



Clay & Twig, a Critz garden center, has been closed for more than two weeks because of snow and ice. (Photo by Jonathan Witt)



Owner Felecia Shelor said Poor Farmers’ Market stayed open because it is the only business in Meadows of Dan that sells diesel. (Photo by Felecia Shelor)

Virginia

(cont. from page 3)

the state chapter for a national organization.

Ransom suggested expanding tracking systems statewide, like VDOT’s carcass removal data, to provide a clearer picture and improve planning.

A dedicated fund could help Virginia leverage federal matching grants for wildlife crossing projects, allowing state contributions to be paired with federal dollars and maximizing the impact of voluntary donations without requiring large allocations from the state budget, Ransom said.

Virginia already has wildlife crossing projects near the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in Chesapeake, under the Fairfax County Parkway at Fort Belvoir, and on Interstate Highway 64 west of Charlottesville, where fencing helps guide animals to

underpasses.

Simonds also introduced HB 596, which focused on implementation rather than funding. The bill directed the secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, in coordination with the secretary of Transportation, to convene an interagency group to advance priorities in the Wildlife Corridor Action Plan. HB 596 did not advance out of the House rules studies subcommittee. A budget proposal of \$100,000 was connected to the bill.

HB 597 follows earlier wildlife corridor legislation by Sen. Dave Marsden, D-Fairfax. Measures establishing the Wildlife Corridor Action Plan in 2020 and requiring agencies to incorporate corridors into planning in 2021 were enacted, while similar grant fund proposals in 2024 and 2025 did not advance.

HB 597 was assigned on Jan. 20 to the Appropriations subcommittee on Commerce, Agriculture and Natural Resources, where it remains under consideration.

Capital News Service is a program of Virginia Commonwealth University’s Robertson School of Communication. Students in the program provide state government coverage for a variety of media outlets in Virginia.

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GO,
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Good luck to our
local student athletes!

Fire

(cont. from page 1)



The building was being rented out by Thomas Industrial Fabrication as a working warehouse.

We were trying to fight it from the outside,” he said. Shough estimated 40 firefighters and service personnel were on scene. In addition to the Woolwine crew, those from Fairystone Volunteer Fire Department, Smith River Volunteer Fire Department, Stuart Volunteer Fire Department, Moorefield Store Volunteer Fire Department, Patrick Springs Volunteer Fire Department, Bassett Volunteer Fire



More than 40 firefighters and emergency personnel responded to the fire. Contributed photos

Department, as well as Patrick Henry Volunteer Fire Department, and Meadows of Dan Volunteer Fire Department helped fight the blaze. Patrick County Emergency Medical Services, Smith River Rescue Squad, and the Patrick County Sheriff's Department were also on scene. No one was injured in the fire. The cause of the fire is currently unknown.

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FROM MARTINSVILLE, VA - Take Hwy 58W, go 7 miles, Horsepasture Fire Dept. on left at corner of 58W & Rt. 687 (Soapstone Road). **WATCH FOR SIGNS**
FROM STUART, VA - Take Hwy 58E into Henry County, turn right on Rt. 687 (Soapstone Road), 1st road to right just past Old Country Store & Hillcrest Baptist Church. **LOOK FOR SIGNS**

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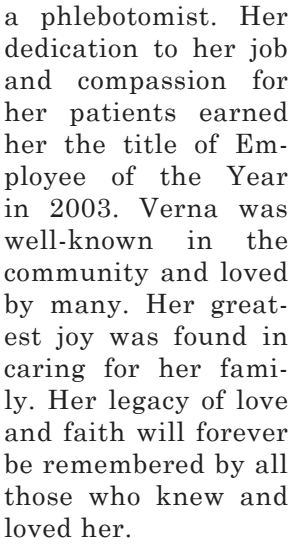

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Lola “Aylees” Belcher Turner

Verna was of the Christian faith and a member of Kearfott Memorial Baptist Church. She graduated as valedictorian from Stuart High School, class of 1950. She worked 36 years at Memorial Hospital of Martinsville and Henry County as

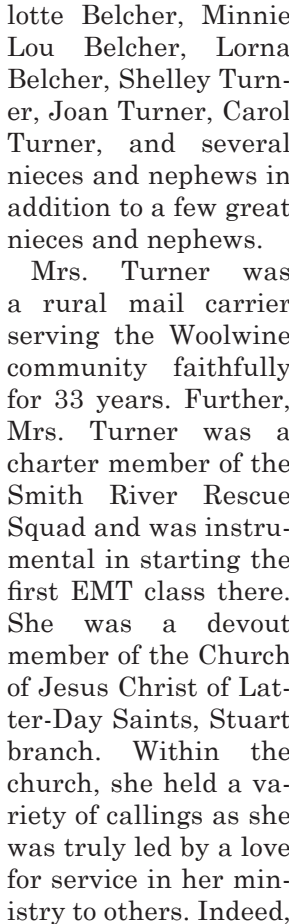


a phlebotomist. Her dedication to her job and compassion for her patients earned her the title of Employee of the Year in 2003. Verna was well-known in the community and loved by many. Her greatest joy was found in caring for her family. Her legacy of love and faith will forever be remembered by all those who knew and loved her.

Wright Funeral
Service & Crematory
is serving the family.

Surviving are four children, Timothy Turner; Nancy Turner Belcher (David); Stephen Turner (Charity); and Matthew Turner (Jennifer); eight grandchildren, Cole (Amy), Layton (Vandalina), Logan, Lucas, Jillian and Juliet; one great-grandson, Ryker; two sisters, Oneda Conner and Freeda Whitlow; one brother, Elvin "Duck" Belcher and two brothers-in-law, Barney Whitlow and Mitcheal Turner; six sisters-in-law Char-

“I was chairman of the Republi-



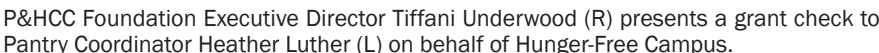
Funeral services will be held at Moody's Funeral Home in Stuart, Sunday, February 15, at 2:00 in the afternoon with Brother Dan Wait officiating. Burial will follow in the Boyd-Hylton-Turner Family Cemetery. The family will receive friends at Moody's Funeral Home in Stuart, Saturday, February 14, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Woolwine Ruritans Club, P.O. Box 203, Woolwine, VA 24185 or the Smith River Squad, P.O. Box 122, Woolwine, VA 24185. Online condolences may be sent by visiting www.moody-funeralservices.com.

(cont. from page 1)

“Charlie Poindexter was the real thing. He was a man of deep conviction, quiet strength, and unwavering devotion to his community, his Commonwealth, and his country. He was a farmer, an

"I enjoyed working with him in the House of Delegates to promote the Republican Party and deliver solutions for rural communities. I am praying for his wife, Janet, his family, and his community as we mourn the loss of a good man, legislative leader, and rural com-

"I am exceptionally excited to receive these funds! During the month of January, the pantry was operational for only 9 days, during which time we served 49 students (with 20 of those being first-time pantry visitors). Food insecurity is a real concern for many of our students; and, fortunately, word about the pantry is spreading. While this is phenomenal, it also means that there is a huge need to be met and we cannot operate absent the support of grants like this. Because of HFC, we will be able to keep our pantry shelves stocked so we can keep feeding our students and their families," said pantry coordinator Heather Luther.



- Expanding and updating storage capacity, including new shelving, containers, refrigerators, and other

equipment such as microwaves, coffee makers, food safety materials, carts or dollies, and reusable bags

- Supporting current and new in-

PATRICK PULPITS

Faith That Stands Firm in a Fearful World

By Pastor Wayne Moore
High Point Baptist Church, Stuart, VA

Fear is something every one of us knows well. Some fears are reasonable, but many are nothing more than figments of our imagination, robbing us of joy and peace. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus teaches us how to face fear, and He reminds us that when we learn to fear God, we no longer have to be controlled by fear. This may seem impossible at first, but it becomes clear when we remember that the God we fear is also the God who cares. His care enables us to remain faithful in a world that often persecutes His children.

Matthew 10:28–31 presents two compelling reasons why Jesus’ followers can stand firm. First, we do not have to fear man when we fear God. Jesus warns that people may destroy the body, but they cannot touch the soul. “Destroy” does not mean annihilate, but to ruin beyond usefulness. We see this in everyday life: a car totaled in a wreck, a book ruined by rain, or a casserole burned beyond saving. Humanity was created for a higher purpose, expressed beautifully in the Westminster Shorter Catechism: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” Scripture supports this calling in passages such as 1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 11:36, Psalm 73:25, and Psalm 16:11.

Those who reject Christ face eternal ruin, separated from the God they were made to glorify and enjoy. But this is not the destiny of believers. Heaven awaits those who trust in Christ, where joy and worship will never end. Because of this hope, Christians do not have to fear what people may do to them. Whatever harm comes because of faithfulness is temporary.

A striking example of this courage comes from the Nazi occupation of Holland. A young boy once watched German officers press

a gun to his father’s temple, demanding information about hidden weapons. His father, normally timid and even afraid of the dentist, stood calm and steady. He quietly quoted the words of Jesus: “Do not fear those who kill the body, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.” The soldiers backed away, and the boy never forgot the courage he witnessed that day.

The second reason we can stand firm is equally comforting: our heavenly Father cares for us. Jesus points to sparrows, the cheapest creatures sold in the marketplace, two for a penny or five for two pennies according to Luke 12:6. Yet not one falls without the Father’s knowledge. As one writer observed, “God attends the funeral of every sparrow.” If God watches over the smallest bird, how much more does He watch over His children.

Jesus then turns to something even more intimate. While a mother may count her baby’s fingers and toes, she has never counted the hairs on her child’s head. Yet God has. If He cares about a single hair, He cares about the whole person. He knows us fully, cares for us personally, and loves us without measure.

This truth inspired the beloved hymn “His Eye Is on the Sparrow.” In 1905, the hymn’s author met a disabled couple in New York who remained remarkably cheerful despite their hardships. When asked how they kept such joy, the husband replied simply, “His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.” Those words became the seed of a song that has strengthened countless hearts.

Since God knows us so completely and cares for us so deeply, we do not need to waste our lives in fear. Instead, we can devote ourselves to knowing and caring for one another with the same tenderness our heavenly Father shows to us.

=Study finds Imagination= Library boosts early literacy

A new international study found children enrolled in Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library show stronger early literacy skills, including greater interest in books and increased participation during shared reading.

The findings include children in Patrick County, where the program has been operating since 2023 and currently serves 395 children.

The study analyzed responses from more than 86,000 caregivers across the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and Ireland. Researchers compared families enrolled in the program with those who were not.

Results showed children in the United States were significantly more likely to show interest in books, join in during reading time and initiate shared reading when enrolled in Imagination Library. The study also found caregivers were more likely to engage children by discussing pictures, encouraging participation and building consistent reading routines.

Rebecca Adcock, executive director of the

Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, said the program helps remove barriers to early learning.

“The Dolly Parton Imagination Library is the most equitable program to help children build reading skills that will benefit them later in life,” Adcock said.

Dolly Parton launched the program more than 30 years

ago in honor of her father, who could not read or write. The initiative provides one free, age-appropriate book each month to enrolled children from birth to age 5.

Locally, Patrick County Imagination Library supported by the Patrick County Chamber of Commerce, One Family Productions, Stuart Rotary and Step Inc.

Weekly SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦
♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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BIBLE TRIVIA

BY WILSON CASEY

1. Is the book of Romans (KJV) in the *Old or New Testament or neither?*
2. From Daniel 3, who saw four men walking in the fiery furnace? *Solomon, Job, Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar*
3. In 2 Kings 9, who was thrown from a window and struck the ground dead? *Hezekiah, Jezebel, Joash, Abner*

4. With whom did Lot fully escape the city of Sodom? *Wife, Two daughters, Son, Two friends*

5. From the book of Genesis, who was the wife of Joseph? *Tamar, Rebekah, Asenath, Taphanes*
6. What does “Naomi” mean? *Beautiful star, Holy woman, Pleasant, Righteous*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Nebuchadnezzar, 3) Jezebel, 4) Two daughters, 5) Asenath, 6) Pleasant



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8 Mail-related
14 Baio and Turow
20 Wife of Nero
21 Fingers-in-ears syllables
22 Headwear for Mr. Peanut
23 Golden State hoopster
25 Existence
26 Days of yore, archaically
27 Ruling group
28 Schlepped through the entrance
30 Ballesteros of golf
33 Groom, e.g.
35 Exemplary Houston hoopster?
38 San Antonio hoopster scaling a mountain?
42 Suffix with lion
43 Guy in the fam
44 High peak
45 Heavenly
46 Health club
48 Gyro bread
49 Semi fuel

- 51 Cowardly Denver hoopster?
55 "Mom" actress Jaime Turow
58 Start eating
59 Org. against pollution
60 Redding of R&B
61 Event for stunt pilots
64 — -Z (total)
65 Foot part
68 Brooklyn hoopster using a rod and reel?
71 Phoenix hoopster preparing a typeface for printing?
74 Frau's "Oh!"
75 Girl in the fam
76 Name originally proposed for Utah
78 Gas guzzler
79 Reindeer kin
80 Notion, to Fifi
81 Damsels
84 Los Angeles hoopster originally from New England?
90 Train in the pool
92 All excited
93 Mtn. stat

- 94 Tested for fit
97 "— culpa!"
98 "Stillmatic" rapper
99 Footed vase
101 Sacramento hoopster holding power?
103 Eco-conscious Charlotte hoopster?
107 Livy's lang.
108 Words in an analogy
109 Some nobles' domains
110 Jamaican pop genre
112 Baby wolf
114 Justification
116 Chicago hoopster devoid of spontaneity and emotion?
122 Sock with diamond patterns
123 "Seinfeld" character
124 Shrunken Asian lake
125 Some vowel sounds
126 Phrase structure
127 Lower than

DOWN

- 1 Mooing beast
2 High card

- 3 Fr. holy woman
4 Olajuwon of the NBA
5 Daredevil
6 Power sources with spinning sails
7 Tearful
8 Strategize
9 Rowers' tools
10 35mm camera inits.
11 Alteration pro
12 Not silently
13 Huge
14 Directs
15 Buyable apartments
16 Vision-related
17 Have high aspirations
18 Bit of ink art
19 Pigpen
24 Flying needs
29 Collect bit by bit
30 Cousin of a jack mackerel
31 Oval-shaped
32 Spiteful
34 Even one
35 Capital of Bavaria
36 One-named Deco master
37 Exactly
39 Pollen eaters
40 "Get 'em, Spot!"

- 41 Syllable after "oom"
46 Broiling bar
47 Church seat
48 Club
49 swingers' gp.
50 Meeting period, informally
52 Picked
53 — pot (sinus-cleaning product)
54 "Once — a time ..."
56 Dillydallies
57 Dark half of a Chinese circle
60 Birds — feather
62 News aggregation website
63 Precipitous
64 "— girl!"
65 Giant waves
66 Paid more than
67 Musician Brian
69 Capri, e.g.
70 Adidas rival
72 Pro —
73 Celtic speaker
77 Piece for seven
79 Heart test, for short
80 Ailing
82 Apathetic response

- 83 Ding- —
84 Light half of a Chinese circle
85 Lab gelatin
86 Horse feed holders
87 Body of rules
88 Verdi's "— tu"
89 Fix illegally
91 Pudding starch
95 China's Zhou
96 Day, in Peru
99 Open, as a new rug
100 Some French wines
101 Make a new digital image of
102 Dry dog food
104 Class that's a cinch
105 "Blue" singer LeAnn
106 Hockey great Cam
110 Capital of Yemen
111 Lego alternative
113 — Bator
114 Jogged, e.g.
115 History unit
117 Smack
118 Taxi
119 D.C.'s nation
120 Tennis call
121 "— -di-dah!"

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

Meetings

Wednesday, Feb. 18
The Stuart Town Council will meet at 6 p.m. in the town office.

Thursday, Feb. 19
The Patrick County School Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. in the School Board Office.

Events

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.

Thursday, Feb. 12
The Patrick County Senior Citizens Group will meet at 11 a.m. in the Hooker Building at Rotary Field in Stuart. Entertainment will be provided by Roger Wells. Beverages will be provided. The menu is potluck, so attendees are requested to bring their favorite meats, vegetables, and/or desserts to share.

Stuart Baptist Church will host a community dinner starting at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Everyone is invited to attend.

Step/Stroll Showcase, Walker Theatre, P&HCC Campus. Free admission. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Exhibition begins at 6 p.m.

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 is not required.

Tuesday, February 17
Special Education Advisory Committee meets, 4 p.m., conference room, Patrick County School Board Office in Stuart. Open to public. Anyone who wishes to be placed on the agenda may contact Andy Bowlin, Director of Special Education at 276-694-3163 by noon on February 17, 2026.

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.

Stuart Rotary Club will partner with Tin Pen Alley to host a fundraiser that will help support the Patrick County Food Bank. Tin Pen will donate \$1 per pint from 6-8 p.m. Bowling is \$4 per game per person. Shoe rental is \$3. A \$5 cash donation and/or non-perishable food donation will be collected to support the Food Bank.

Friday, Feb. 20
The community food pantry will be at the Fairystone Volunteer Fire Department from 3-4 p.m.

Poor Man's Supper hosted by the Patrick Springs Rotary Club, 4-7 p.m. in the community room at Patrick Springs Park, 2 Ballpark Road, Patrick Springs. Funds raised will help with upkeep of the playground area and equipment at the park. The price is \$9 per plate, which includes pintos, ham, taters, cornbread, dessert, and a

drink. Dine-in or take out options are available.

Saturday, Feb. 21
Adam Murphy, one of the three Democratic Candidates running in a primary to unseat Morgan Griffith, will attend the Patrick County Democratic Committee meeting at 10 a.m. in the Patrick County Library. Meeting is also available on Zoom by visiting pcdemco.org

Ongoing

The Patrick Springs Ruritan Club meets at 6:30 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of each month in the community room at Patrick Springs Park, 2 Ballpark Road, Patrick Springs.

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@ravenrock-church.org.

The Carroll County Genealogy Club is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The Patrick County Senior Citizens Group is sponsoring a June 2 - 5, 2026 trip to the eastern shore of Virginia. Trip flyers are available at the Patrick County Recreation Office (276) 694-3917 or by contacting Judy Lacks, trip coordinator, at (276) 694-4767.

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.

State commits \$14.5 million annually to boost college internships

Virginia has launched a new statewide program aimed at expanding paid internship opportunities for college students while helping employers build a future workforce.

The initiative, called InternshipsVA, will provide guidance, grants and recruitment support to Virginia businesses interested in creating paid internships. The state has committed \$14.5 million annually to fund the program.

InternshipsVA is part of a broader effort to attract and retain workers in Virginia. Funded through the Commonwealth Innovative Internship Fund and Program, it offers financial incentives and technical assistance to employers, particularly small and mid-sized businesses.

Participating employers may qualify for grants covering up to 50% of undergraduate interns' wages. The program also provides

regional internship managers to assist with program design and recruiting, free internship postings through a partnership with Handshake, and training resources for employers.

Gov. Abigail Spanberger announced the program in Richmond alongside leaders from the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Virginia Business Higher Education Council and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

"Virginia's students need more hands-on opportunities to connect with real-world careers," Spanberger said, adding that the program is designed to help students gain experience before graduation while encouraging them to stay in the state for work.

Employers seeking more information about InternshipsVA can visit vedp.org/internshipsva.

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Snow can play helpful role in garden soil enrichment and root insulation

Beneath the ice-glazed blanket of snow testing Virginians’ patience is the promise of a verdant spring. While frozen conditions disrupt life on the street level, plants and

grasses are insulated from extreme cold as slow-melting snow provides steady moisture and atmospheric nutrients.

Depending on conditions, soil-enriching elements like nitrogen and phosphorus attach to snowflakes falling through the atmosphere, explained Scot Ferguson, a Virginia Cooperative Extension agent in Hanover County.

Homeowners can be intentional in uti-

lizing “the poor man’s fertilizer.” When clearing snow onto garden beds and mulched areas, a tiresome chore becomes a down payment for spring.

Moving snow to landscaped and natural areas can introduce “a little bump of nitrogen,” he said. “You’d want to relocate snow along the drip line of the shrub or tree, kind of like you would with mulch.”

As snow melts, fertilizing nutrients are slowly released into the soil. And come spring thaw, the gradual melt is a steady source of moisture for roots.

“Plants are probably not getting super waterlogged, and you’re not dealing with runoff,” Ferguson said. “They will be quite hydrated and trying to transpire!”

Landowners in rural Virginia managing pasture and grassland typically spend between \$4 and \$10 per acre for professional nutrient management planning. Ferguson said they welcome the gentle deposit



of nutrients resulting from snowfall.

“And for bigger landowners with cover crop programs, that’s where they find the bang for their buck,” he said.

Native plant species are adapted to Virginia’s climate, but some ornamentals like boxwood or tender perennials can sustain cellular damage from a quick-moving cold front.

Even a modest layer of snow protects soil from extreme temperature fluctuations, re-

ported North Carolina Cooperative Extension. This insulating effect stabilizes soil temperatures, preventing harm to plant roots.

“And if it’s warm enough under there, the snow forms an insulating blanket, and grass will certainly grow,” Ferguson said. “Snow still allows sunlight to penetrate its surface. If the plant can move water, if the ground isn’t frozen, then plants and grass can probably photosynthesize!”

Though six more

weeks of winter weather is predicted, temperatures can fluctuate.

“Your flowering plants may come into bloom when we have warm weather,” said Mark Viette, retired host of In the Garden, a video series presented by Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. Milder days may be followed by “a real cold spell.”

He advised protecting flowering plants with a sheet or soft cover, warmed with an incandescent lamp rated for outdoor use.

LEGAL

PUBLIC NOTICE
The Patrick County Planning Commission will have a regular business meeting on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 6 p.m.
The meeting will be at the Patrick & Henry Community College (Stuart site) in the Community Room.

LEGAL

**INVITATION FOR SEALED BIDS
WASTE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
IFB# 2026-006-42400**
The County of Patrick is requesting sealed bids from qualified private firms and public entities to provide transportation services for acceptance non-hazardous solid waste generated within Patrick County. The bid packet is located on the Patrick County, Virginia website at www.co.patrick.va.us or by email at trussell@co.patrick.va.us.

LEGAL

**REQUESTS FOR QUOTES
Accounting Services
OVERVIEW**
The County of Patrick is requesting quotes from independent certified public accounts (CPA’s) to perform accounting services for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026.
Please go to the Patrick County website at www.co.patrick.va.us to see the bid package.
Requests for information related to this RFQ should be directed to:
Name: Lori Jones Title: Finance Officer
Phone number: 276-693-2003 Email: ljones@co.patrick.va.us
Dated issued February 4, 2026

LEGAL

**PATRICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
P.O. BOX 346
STUART, VIRGINIA 24171**
February 9, 2026
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO MEET
The next meeting of the Patrick County Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at the Patrick County School Board Office in the conference room, Stuart, Virginia.
This meeting is open to the public. Anyone who wishes to be placed on the agenda should contact Andy Bowlin, Director of Special Education at 276-694-3163 by noon on February 17, 2026.

LEGAL

**REQUESTS FOR QUOTES
Audit Services**
ACCEPTANCE DATE: February 18, 2026, no later than 2:00 PM EST
NUMBER: 2026-005-12113
ACCEPTANCE PLACE: Patrick County Finance Dept
106 Rucker St, Ste 218
Stuart, VA 24171
OVERVIEW
The County of Patrick, Virginia (the County) requests independent certified public accounts to submit proposals to enter into a term contract to perform a financial audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, with the option to renew four (4) additional years thereafter.
To view the complete RFQ, please go to the Patrick county website at www.co.patrick.va.us
Requests for information related to this RFP should be directed to:
Name: Lori Jones, CPA
Title: Finance Officer
Phone: (276) 693-2003
Email: ljones@co.patrick.va.us
Web Site: www.co.patrick.va.us
Issue Date: February 4, 2026

LEGAL

**NOTICE OF SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE SALE
967 Jeb Stuart Highway, Meadows of Dan, VA 24120**
By virtue of the power and authority contained in a Deed of Trust dated February 25, 2013 and recorded at March 12, 2013 in Instrument Number 130000402 in the Clerk’s Office for the Patrick County Virginia Circuit Court, Virginia, securing a loan which was originally \$102,400.00. The appointed SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE, Commonwealth Trustees, LLC will offer for sale at public auction at the front steps of the Circuit Court for Patrick County located at 101 W Blue Ridge Street, Stuart, VA 24171.
March 11, 2026 at 11:30 AM
improved real property, with an abbreviated legal description of the following described property, to wit: **ALL OF THAT CERTAIN LOT OR PARCEL OF LAND, TOGETHER WITH ALL THE IMPROVEMENTS THEREON AND APPURTENANTS THEREUNTO BELONGING, LYING AND BEING IN THE BLUE RIDGE MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT OF PATRICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS, TO-WIT:**
CONTAINING .65 OF AN ACRE, AND BEING IN ALL RESPECTS THE SAME LOT OR PARCEL OF LAND THAT WAS CONVEYED TO JOHN G. THIBEAULT AND DARLENE L. THIBEAULT, HUSBAND AND WIFE, BY DEED DATED AUGUST 30, 1989, FROM GERALD REYNOLDS, ET ALS., HEIRS AT LAW OF A. LOUISE REYNOLDS, DECEASED, WHICH DEED IS RECORDED IN THE CLERK’S OFFICE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PATRICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA, IN DEED BOOK 272, AT PAGE 762.
LESS AND EXCEPT
BEING SHOWN AS PARCEL 096 ON SHEET 21 OF THE PLANS FOR ROUTE 58, HIGHWAY PROJECT 0058-962-E02, RW-201, BEGINNING ON THE NORTH(LEFT) SIDE OF THE ROUTE 58 WEST BOUND CONSTRUCTION BASELINE W, FROM THE LANDS NOW OR FORMERLY BELONGING TO WILLIAM LEE SMITH, GENE PRESTON SMITH, JESSIE MANE S. KELLY AND ELIZABETH W. SMITH, LIFE ESTATE OPPOSITE APPROXIMATE STATION 754+64, TO THE LANDS NOW OR FORMERLY BELONGING TO MARY G. GARRAHAN, ESTATE, OPPOSITE APPROXIMATE STATION 754+75.50, AND CONTAINING 0.003 HECTARE (0.0083 ACRE), MORE OR LESS, LAND.
AND as more fully described in the aforesaid Deed of Trust.
TERMS OF SALE: The property will be sold “AS IS,” WITHOUT REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY OF ANY KIND AND SUBJECT TO conditions, restrictions, reservations, easements, rights of way, and all other matters of record taking priority over the Deed of Trust to be announced at the time of sale. A deposit of \$20,000 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower, will be required at the time of sale, in the form of certified check, cashier’s check or money order by the purchaser. The balance of the purchase price, with interest at the rate contained in the Deed of Trust Note from the date of sale to the date said funds are received in the office of the SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE, will be due within fifteen (15) days of sale. In the event of default by the successful bidder, the entire deposit shall be forfeited and applied to the costs and expenses of sale and Substitute Trustee’s fee. All other public charges or assessments, including water/sewer charges, whether incurred prior to or after the sale, and all other costs incident to settlement to be paid by the purchaser. In the event taxes, any other public charges have been advanced, a credit will be due to the seller, to be adjusted from the date of sale at the time of settlement. Purchaser agrees to pay the seller’s attorneys at settlement, a fee of \$470.00 for review of the settlement documents.
Additional terms will be announced at the time of sale and the successful bidder will be required to execute and deliver to the Substitute Trustees a memorandum or contract of the sale at the conclusion of bidding.
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT
Rosenberg & Associates, LLC
(Attorney for the Secured Party)
4340 East West Highway, Suite 600
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-907-8000
www.rosenberg-assoc.com

By Tom Perry

Continuing with the theme of J. E. B. Stuart and his visits to the homes of former Presidents of the United States, we visit Montpelier, thirty miles to the north of Monticello, the home of James Madison. Stuart and Madison are not two names you automatically think of as having a connection, but the two men have many connections in Orange County, Virginia.

During the War Between the States, James Madison’s former home, Montpelier, was owned by Frank and Thomas Carson, two Irish brothers with banking interests in Baltimore. Confederate officers did not occupy the Montpe-

lier house as a headquarters, but it was a landmark that drew many visiting soldiers. Frank Carson hosted a ball given by General J.E.B. Stuart at Montpelier in 1863. It was not the first time that Stuart and Madison’s families had crossed paths.

Bethenia Letcher, the daughter of William Letcher, was born at Laurel Hill in 1780, just before her father was murdered by a Tory, a person who favored the British during the American Revolution. Bethenia married David Pannill on October 29, 1798.

David Pannill descended from the “Rappahannock” Pannills. Thomas and Catherine Pannill settled on 2500 acres along the Rappahannock River in present day Orange County in 1673. Their son, William, born circa 1670, married Frances Sterne and lived in Richmond County. William II married Sarah Bailey of Middlesex County and lived in Orange County. William III, born in 1737, married Ann Morton and produced fourteen children. The sixth child, David, was born in Orange County, Virginia, on January 15, 1772.

On January 4, 1801, Bethenia gave birth to her first child, a daughter she named Elizabeth Letcher Pannill, the mother of J. E. B. Stuart. The second child, William Letcher Pannill, came into this world on September 10, 1803, just months before his father’s death. David Pannill died in November 1803, leaving a wife and two small children. His tombstone reads, “He had a warm, generous heart, was just to all men, and died among many

friends who sincerely regretted the death of their best friend and benefactor.” Bethenia found herself in the same situation as her mother over twenty years earlier.

On February 3, 1809, the United States Congress organized the Illinois Territory with Alexander Stuart, the grandfather of J. E. B. Stuart, serving as one of three territorial judges. Stuart began a career serving on the state and federal levels of the judiciary in the Illinois and Missouri territories and then in the states. On July 17, 1809, Governor Edwards of Illinois took the oath of office before Judge Stuart. On July 9, 1813, Alexander Stuart resigned as judge, but returned on February 9, 1814. President James Madison and Secretary of State James Monroe commissioned Stuart as a United States Judge. Territorial records listed Judge Stuart as being double paid in Illinois and Missouri on April 27, 1814. On April 3, 1816, Governor William Clark (of Lewis and Clark) of Missouri granted a pardon on the advice of Alexander Stuart.

At noon on October 5, 1829, former President of the United States, James Madison, rose to call a meeting to order in Richmond, Virginia. He stood in the Capital of Virginia, designed by his old friend Thomas Jefferson. The assembled ninety-eight men were to revise the 1776 Virginia Constitution. As the elder statesman spoke, thirty-four year old Archibald Stuart no doubt marveled at the men around him.

Archibald Stuart, the father of J. E. B. Stuart, found himself in the presence of several giants of Virginia and

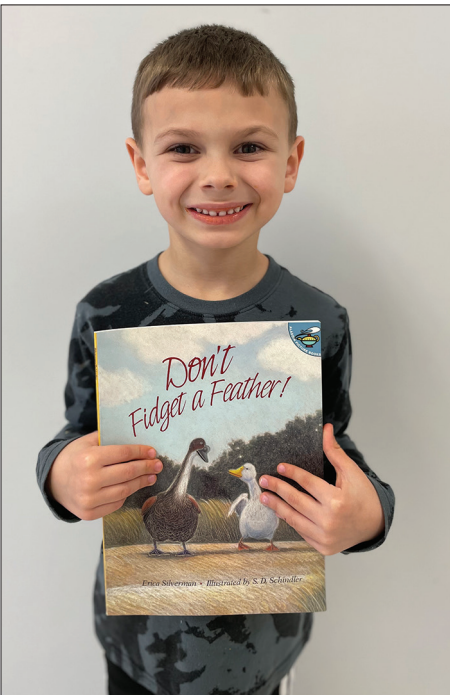
American History at the convention. Madison had once written, “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.” Standing before Archibald Stuart this day, he was one of the last “Founding Fathers,” and he spoke on constitutional matters as few could. Today, we consider him the “Father” of the United States Constitution. James Madison still had seven years to live, and on this day, he nominated the former fifth President, James Monroe, as President of the Convention. The Chief Justice of the United States, Virginian John Marshall, seconded the nomination. Madison, Marshall, and Monroe, who crossed the Delaware River with George Washington in 1776, were joined in the assembly by the infamous John Randolph of Roanoke and the future tenth President of the United States, John Tyler, who lived long enough to serve in the government of the Confederate States of America. Archibald Stuart served as a Delegate to the Virginia Constitutional Convention from October 5, 1829, until January 15, 1830. Among others serving from the 21st Senatorial District were Joseph Martin of Henry County, Benjamin W. S. Cabell, and George Townes of Pittsylvania County.
The Convention of 1829-30 revised the 1776 Constitution of Virginia. Stuart served on a committee charged with “Bill of Rights and matters not referred to foregoing Committees.” Described as a “reformer,” Stuart voted 80% of the time for change in the constitution. He was one of only four
(See Laurel p. 14)

WES announces Warrior Readers

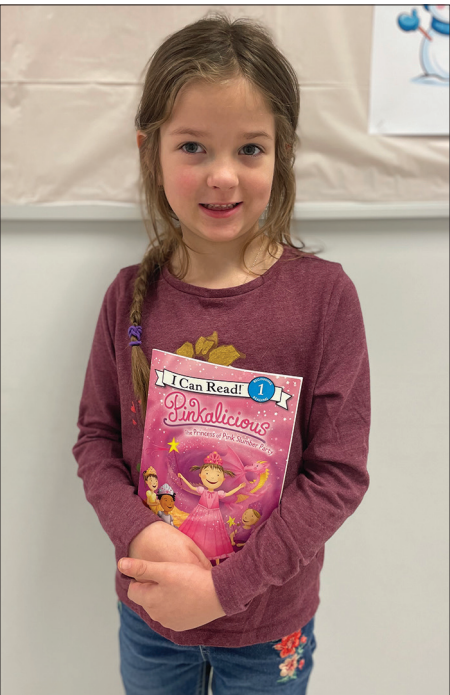
Woolwine Elementary School announced the names of its top readers who participated in the Warrior Reading program during the second quarter. Each student who reached their grade level goal received a free snack and a free personal pan pizza from Pizza Hut. In addition, students who read the most books in each grade also received a free book. Congratulations everyone! We hope that you will keep reading! *This is being republished due to a press issue.*



Pre-K Callahan Donnelly



Kindergarten- Colton Edwards



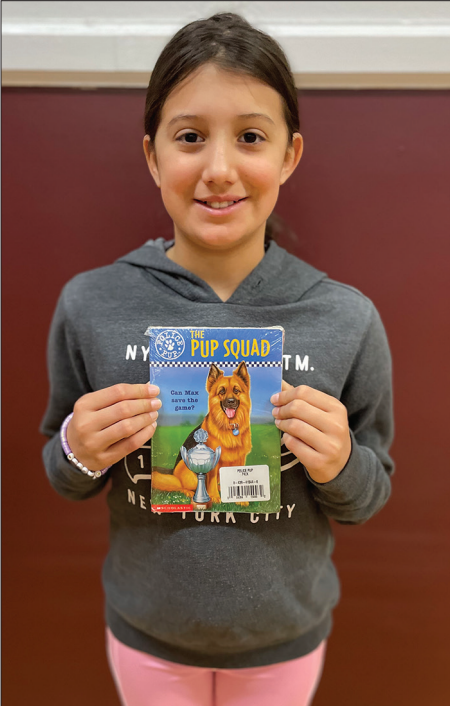
First Grade- Felicity Tyler



Second Grade-Lexi Hubbard



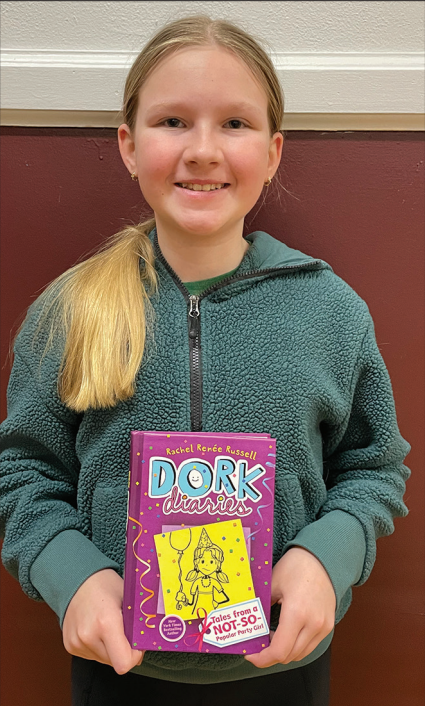
Third Grade-Daisy McBride



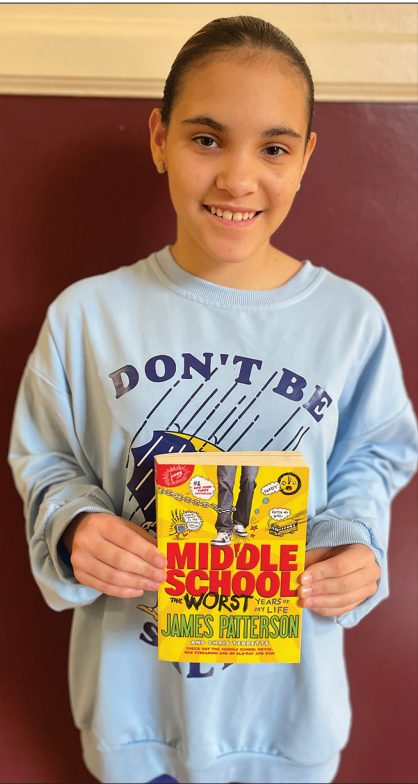
Fourth Grade- Callie Tejeda



Fifth Grade-Melissa Hughes



Sixth Grade-Emmalyn Hubbard



Seventh Grade-Alycia Wilson



First Grade: Seven students tied for first place (left to right), Isabella Johnson, Lachlan King, Dallas Leviner, Georgia Cockram, Abigail Cox, Lincoln Leath.

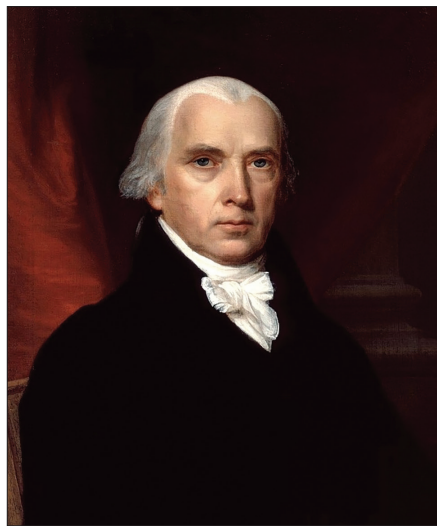
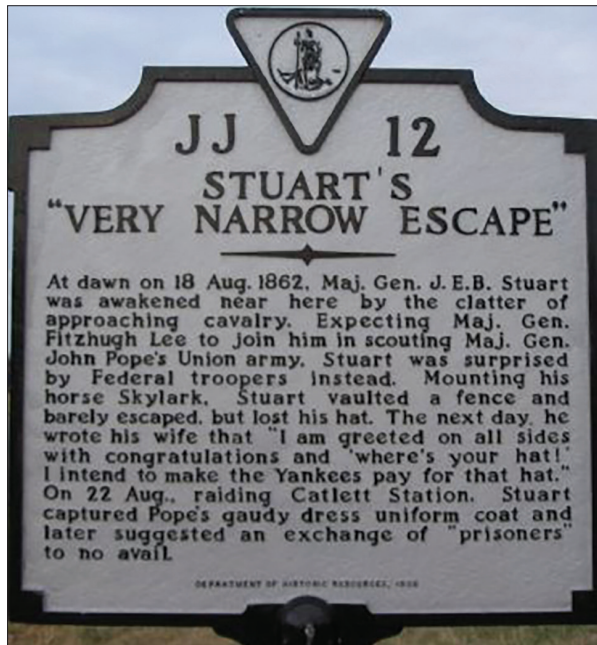
Girl Scout Lock-In held in January

Patrick County Girl Scout Troop #1302 held its yearly Lock-In in Jan. at Providence UMC. The night started with a spaghetti dinner and chicken nuggets. The girls enjoyed their meal then started working on Solutions Superstar badge. Lots of problem solving, creative thinking, and real world solutions went into this badge as well as lots of fun. Girls enjoyed lots of snacks throughout the night as they worked and played. Then girls began to settle down and climbed into their sleeping bags and watched some movies. Finally sleep hit them all and the night went well. Next morning breakfast started the day. Next it was clean-up time and girls headed home. Much thanks to Providence UMC for allowing the girls the use of the fellowship halls for the evening and this enjoyable event! Remember Girl Scouts are selling cookies now. There will be cookie booths at Walmart for the next several weekends. Please buy your cookies from your favorite Girl Scout or from the ones selling at the cookie booths. Thanks for your support!



Girl Scouts and leaders who attended Patrick County Girl Scout Troop #1302's annual Lock-In.

(cont. from page 12)



delegates east of the Blue Ridge along with Henry A. Wise, calling for a “white basis” in representation that challenged the authority of piedmont plantation owners and increased the power of the western

part of Virginia. While that measure failed, along with a resolution on dueling, an amendment passed to make the removal of corrupt or incompetent judges “more efficient.” Stuart supported opening the right

to vote to “leaseholders,” not just property owners.

In the summer of 1862, the Army of Northern Virginia fought its way into the history books. After pushing McClellan away from Richmond, Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia took the initiative and began to move north. J. E. B. Stuart had one nearly disastrous stop in Orange County. Union cavalry almost captured Stuart after Georgian Robert Tombs failed to guard a river crossing.

Stuart fled the porch of the house he was sleeping on, losing his plumed hat and nearly his dignity as a prisoner of war. Stuart repaid the Union by raiding Catlett's Station and capturing the dress uniform of the Union army commander John Pope and several hundred thousand dollars in greenbacks. Stuart

jokingly sent a telegram proposing a swap of the prisoners, his hat for Pope's uniform. No reply came in response. Stuart received a promotion to Major General in the summer of 1862. He was twenty-nine years old and would command Lee's cavalry for the rest of his life. The following year, he would visit James Madison's Montpelier.

James Madison's Montpelier eventually came to be owned by the DuPont family. They donated the property to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has restored the home to its appearance in Madison's time. Showing the influence of Thomas Jefferson's architectural vision, the home once hosted James Ewell Brown "Jeb" Stuart.

For more, visit <https://savingplaces.org/places/montpelier>.

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A photograph of the exterior of the Norris Funeral Services, Inc. and Crematory building. The building is a single-story structure with a combination of red brick and white horizontal siding. It features a prominent front entrance with a white portico supported by four square columns. The entrance has a set of double glass doors. The roof is dark grey. The building is surrounded by a green lawn and some landscaping, including small trees and shrubs. In the background, there are more trees and a clear sky.